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AN ANALYSIS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISMS OF NORTHERN CH'AN BUDDHISM

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ABSTRACT

The division of Ch'an Buddhism into a Southern line and a Northern line, which took place in the middle of the eighth century in China, is one of the best known historical events concerning the early Ch'an schools. However, the philosophic issues involved in this doctrinal controversy have not been studied systematically and in depth by any Western scholars. Generally speaking, Westerners have tended to repeat the criticisms of Northern Ch'an found in the writings of the Southern line, and consequently, scholars have tended to be most sympathetic to the Southern line.

In the light of the above, this dissertation begins with an introductory consideration of the actual issues involved in the dispute, determined by a careful study of the original documents of the two schools composed during this period, and then followed by a clarification of the philosophical problems involved. Once the central philosophic issues are isolated,

the dissertation proceeds with an analysis of the points of dispute, and attempts to come to some conclusions regarding the validity of the criticisms and the ultimate nature of the dispute.

In the first chapter, four central objections to the Northern line of Ch'an are identified:

1. Northern Ch'an taught a quietist form of meditation.
2. Northern Ch'an taught a doctrine of gradual enlightenment.
3. Northern Ch'an was dualistic in its formulation of the path of practice, and dualistic in its theoretic formulation of Buddhist doctrine.
4. Northern Ch'an masters were in error when they claimed that Shen-hsiu (the founder of the Northern line) was the official successor to the Ch'an patriarchs because the symbols of authority were actually passed on to the founder of the Southern line, Hui-neng.

The first three objections are discussed in detail, but the fourth criticism is not of a philosophical nature, and so is not pursued any further.

The second chapter discusses the criticisms of meditation in the Northern line: (a) the techniques lead to quietism; (b) the entire practice of seated meditation is rejected; (c) the meditation techniques are based upon a dualistic

foundation. The third chapter analyzes the best known objection to Northern Ch'an--that it advocated gradual enlightenment. In this chapter, it is shown that the issue is oversimplified when understood as simply gradual versus sudden enlightenment; instead it is argued that Northern Ch'an advocated gradual cultivation which terminates in sudden enlightenment, whereas the Southern line advocated an initial sudden enlightenment experience followed by a gradual working-through and development of the initial insight.

Chapter four discusses the argument that Northern Ch'an was dualistic in its insights and techniques. It is argued that the Southern line attacked the North because they felt that: (a) Northern Ch'an philosophy cannot allow for a genuine overturning of the dualistic conceptual structure; (b) Northern Ch'an philosophy does not recognize that all dualistic conceptual schemes lack ultimacy; (c) Northern Ch'an methods of cultivation advocate a reversal of direction but not a transcendence of dualism, which is required for the genuine attainment of non-dual insight.

The fifth and last chapter of the dissertation summarizes the findings, and goes on to draw some tentative conclusions about the nature of the division of Ch'an into two lines. It is argued that Northern Ch'an was not guilty of the errors which the Southern line claimed to find, but, this is not to

say that the two lines were identical. There were some very important differences in their emphases and formulations of the path to liberating insight. First of all, Southern Ch'an stressed "seeing" (*prajñā*) with a corresponding deemphasis upon meditation and concentration practices. The Northern line stressed meditation practices and the gradual elimination of defilements (*kleśa*), which process might be described as a "gradual purification of the mind." A second difference stemmed from different views regarding what can be said at all about reality. This difference concerns the range and limits of the speakable. The Southern line, believing that the absolute truth should not be expressed in mundane language which could be very misleading, generally preferred to speak at the highest level of truth (*paramārtha* *satya*), the level of the goal of final enlightenment. On the other hand, the Northern line, wishing to assist those who were not yet ready to make the leap to final enlightenment, emphasized *upāya* ("skillful means") as a device to bring people to Awakening, which involves speaking at the worldly, or mundane level of speech (*saṁvṛti*).

The conclusion of the dissertation, then, is that the nature of the philosophical dispute between the two lines of Ch'an was not as perceived by the majority of commentators. The three objections raised by the Southern line are incorrect, although they may be accounted for by an understanding of the

significant differences between the two lines as brought out in the dissertation. The doctrines and approach of the Northern line was not adopted by the majority of later Ch'an and Zen teachers, but this was not due to deviation from the fundamental insights of Buddhism, or to any deficiency in doctrinal understanding.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BEFEO — Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris.

BSOAS — Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.

CTW — *Ch'uan T'ang Wen* 全唐文, Taipei, 1961. 20 volumes.

CYLYYC — *Chung-kuo chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo chi-k'an* 中國中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊. Bulletin of the Institute of History and Phonology (Academia Sinica).

IBK — *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究. Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies, Tokyo.

T — *Taishō Shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. Tokyo, 1914-1922. 85 volumes.

ZZ — *Dai-Nihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經. Kyoto, 1905-1912. 750 fasc. in 150 volumes.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Problem

Probably the single best-known event in the history of early Ch'an Buddhism is the division of Ch'an into the two lines of North and South. The most important source of information concerning this split has been the account found in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch (Liu-tsu T'an-ching 六祖壇經). According to the Platform Sutra, the Fifth Ch'an Patriarch, Hung-jen (601-674), had two outstanding disciples, Shen-hsiu (605?-706) and Hui-neng (638-713). Shen-hsiu was well-known for his scholarly attainments and understanding, and after leaving the monastery of the Fifth Patriarch, he settled in the capital city in the north of China where he established a line of succession which was later called the "Northern line" (pei-tsung 北宗). On the other hand, Hui-neng settled in a temple in the more southern area of China and propagated a rather different kind of Ch'an,

called the "Southern line."

Later Ch'an histories inform us that Hui-neng's most vocal and energetic disciple, Ho-tsê Shen-hui (670-762), revealed the errors in the teachings of the Northern line, and due to his activities the Southern school ultimately became the official teaching of Ch'an Buddhism from 796 onward.[1] In general, the later Ch'an texts, such as the Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu ("Transmission of the Lamp") have emphasized the doctrines and techniques of the Southern branch of Hui-neng, and have tended to minimize or ignore the ideas and contributions of Northern Ch'an. Apparently these later texts accepted the account of the two schools which is found in the Platform Sutra, and dismissed the Northern Ch'an philosophy. To complicate matters, the Northern line died out following the persecution of Buddhism in 845, and the Northern texts became scattered and lost.

The remarks contained in the Platform Sutra do not furnish us with an unbiased picture of the doctrines and practices of Northern Ch'an, and sometimes its remarks tend to be quite derogatory. For example, following what purports to be a description of the Northern Ch'an teachings, Hui-neng is quoted as saying, "Deluded people do not realize that this is wrong, cling to this doctrine, and become confused."[2] In another place, Hui-neng says, "People who hold this view [Northern Ch'an] obstruct their own original natures and end up by being bound by purity. . . . [The teachings] will cause

an obstruction to Tao."[3]

Even though many Western students have begun to study the details of early Ch'an, the majority of scholars have tended to focus upon the successful Southern tradition, ignoring the actual teachings and doctrines of the Northern line of Shen-hsiu. Consequently, although there is a rich literature dealing with the Southern school of Ch'an and its "Five Houses," we find few discussions of Northern Ch'an thought in any Western language. Even as recently as 1959, Heinrich Dumoulin wrote, "For our knowledge of the doctrines of the northern sect we are forced to rely almost exclusively on the writings of its opponents, which present no objective picture."[4]

This need not be the case. Because of the discovery of numerous early Ch'an texts in the Tun-huang caves of China around the turn of this century, we are in a position to study the actual teachings and doctrines of the Northern line of Shen-hsiu. The ideas of Northern Ch'an can be evaluated according to the tradition's own writings, and we need not rely solely upon the writings of the Southern school for our information.

The main point of interest in this dissertation will be the differences (if any) between the view of Northern Ch'an offered by the Southern Ch'an texts, and the view of Northern Ch'an presented in its own texts. We find numerous criticisms of Northern Ch'an in the Southern school's writings, such as in the Platform Sutra, and people like Hui-neng's

immediate disciple, Ho-tsê Shen-hui, as well as later on by such an eminent Ch'an master as Lin-chi. The purpose of this dissertation is to ascertain whether any or all of the criticisms of Northern Ch'an can be shown to be justified. This will be done by the process of careful philosophical analysis of the original Northern Ch'an documents.

The numerous criticisms of Northern Ch'an seem to be reducible to the following four major categories:

(1) The meditation practices of Northern Ch'an were in error because the Northern line practiced a form of quietism which was of no value in the quest for Awakening.

(2) Northern Ch'an taught an incorrect gradualist doctrine instead of the true and correct doctrine of 'sudden enlightenment.'

(3) The philosophic approach of Northern Ch'an tended to be dualistic and thus not in accord with the non-dual insights of such central texts as the Prajñāpāramitā literature and the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa sūtra.

(4) Shen-hsiu, the founder of the Northern line, did not receive the orthodox transmission of the Patriarch-ship, as symbolized by the robe and bowl of Bodhidharma, and so Shen-hsiu cannot be called the Sixth Patriarch (as at least some of his disciples were doing).

The first three criticisms are of genuine philosophic interest, and the Northern Ch'an writings available for study

are extensive enough to allow us to determine the actual teachings of the Northern line on these points. Although the criticisms of meditation do not seem to have quite the same degree of philosophic interest, nevertheless, there is a philosophical connection between the meditation practices of the Northern line and its basic philosophy. The fourth criticism does not seem to be of any significant philosophic interest and so will not be discussed further.[5]

In the dissertation, the author will clarify the philosophic nature of objections (1), (2), and (3), and, as far as possible, evaluate these to determine whether the criticisms can be shown to justified when compared with the actual teachings of Northern Ch'an.

Sources and Approach

Generally speaking, one chapter of this study will be devoted to each of the three points of conflict, beginning with the charge of quietism, and then the dispute over the 'gradual' vs. 'sudden' teachings. We shall begin by clarifying the nature of the objections and criticisms, and then, by evaluating the topics as discussed in the writings of the Northern line, we shall determine whether or not each criticism is justified. This is the general approach in each chapter.

The basic sources of information concerning the philosophical thinking of Northern Ch'an are the Northern Ch'an texts collected in the Taishō shinshū daizōkyō collection of Buddhist texts,[6] and the carefully edited texts collected and corrected by Ui Hakuju and D. T. Suzuki.[7] Although there are about a dozen different Northern Ch'an texts available for study, not all of the texts are of equal philosophical value as several are early historical accounts. The basic philosophic works of Northern Ch'an are the following:

(1) Kuan-hsin lun 觀心論 ("Treatise on the Clear Contemplation of Mind"). Originally attributed to Bodhidharma, later analysis has shown that the text is actually by Shen-hsiu, the founder of Northern Ch'an.[8] The text is found in T 85 (2833)1270-73.

(2) P'o-hsiang lun 破相論 ("Treatise on Breaking Through Forms"), a more polished and revised version of (1). T 48 (2009)366c-369c. It is also found in the Zokuzōkyō collection of Chinese Buddhist texts, ZZ 15.5.411-414. There are some significant differences between these two versions of (2).

(3) Miao-li yüan-ch'eng kuan 妙理圓成觀 ("Discernment of Marvelous Reality and Highest Truth"), attributed to Shen-hsiu. There exists only a brief excerpt quoted in T 48 (2016)943a24-b6.

(4) Ts'an Ch'an-men shih 讚禪門詩 ("Verses in Praise of Ch'an"). This may be the earliest of the so-called "Five Upāya texts": T 85 (2839)1291-93.

(5) Ta-ch'eng wu-sheng fang-pien men 大乘無生方便門 ("Gateway of Unborn Upāya in the Mahayana"). T 85 (2834)1273b-78a.

(6)-(7) Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien: pei-tsung 大乘五方便北宗 ("Five Upāya of the Mahayana: Northern tradition"). These are two variants of the same text, the longest and most detailed of the Northern Ch'an philosophical texts. In Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, Vol. I, pp. 468-515, and in D. T. Suzuki, Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū, Vol. III, pp. 190-212 and 221-235.

(8) Ta-ch'eng pei-tsung lun 大乘北宗論 ("Treatise by the Northern School of Mahayana"). Three poetic essay-poems, subtitled the "Mahayana Mind": (Ta-ch'eng hsin 大乘心). T 85 (2836)1281c-82a.

Although the following study will not be limited solely to the above texts, we will draw most heavily upon these eight. All are the original writings of the Northern line of Ch'an, written and compiled during the middle of the T'ang dynasty.

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's own.[9] All Chinese and Japanese proper names will be given in the traditional fashion with surnames given first, including the initial footnote citations. The only exception

to this practice will be D.T. Suzuki whose name is well known in the Western manner rather than in the Oriental fashion as Suzuki Daisetz.

We shall use the word "Ch'an" throughout this study to refer to the school of Buddhism which developed in China in the sixth and seventh centuries. When transplanted to Japan, the school became known as the "Zen" school. Although many English authors use the term "Zen" to refer to both the Chinese and Japanese traditions, we shall not follow this practice.

All Sanskrit words no longer considered foreign to English, such as karma, Nirvana, sutra, Mahayana, Hinayana, Bodhisattva, etc., are treated as English words and hence are given without diacritical markings and are not italicized.

FOOTNOTES

1. In 796, thirty-four years after the death of Ho-tsê Shen-hui, the designated heir of Emperor Te-tsung (779-805) called a meeting of Ch'an masters in order to determine which line of Ch'an and which doctrines were to be accepted as orthodox. At this meeting, the Southern line was officially declared to be the orthodox school, and Hui-neng was officially declared to be the Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an, thus settling the matter about the succession. Interestingly enough, Ho-tsê Shen-hui, Hui-neng's best known disciple, was declared to be the Seventh Patriarch (according to Tsung-mi's Yüan-chüeh-ching ta-shu ch'ao, ZZ 14.277b).

2. Philip B. Yampolsky, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Columbia University Press, 1967, p. 137 (hereinafter abbreviated "Platform Sutra").

3. Yampolsky, ibid., p. 140.

4. Heinrich Dumoulin, A History of Zen Buddhism, pp. 85-6.

5. This is the issue which has received the most attention by contemporary scholars. Generally speaking, scholarly opinion tends to view the argument over who was the real Sixth Patriarch as a result of the attacks and criticisms of Ho-tsê Shen-hui. Although this is a most interesting historical issue, it does not seem to have any philosophical ramifications which would justify its inclusion in this analysis.

6. Taishō shinshū daizōkyō, Tokyo, 1914-1922, 100 volumes. All footnote references will be given by 'T' followed by volume number, serial number in parentheses, page number, and, when appropriate, column and line numbers.

7. Ui Hakuju, Zenshūshi kenkyū, Vol. I, Tokyo, 1939; D. T. Suzuki, Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū, Vol. III, Tokyo, 1968. See the bibliography for other sources on Northern Ch'an.

8. A detailed study of the authorship of this text can be found in Sekiguchi Shindai, Daruma daishi no kenkyū, Tokyo, 1969, pp. 213-234.

9. The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance of Professor Chang Chung-yuan, who

patiently reviewed my translations of the Chinese master Ho-tsê Shen-hui, thereby improving them considerably. Dr. Robert Gimello reviewed and improved my translations of some of the Northern Ch'an texts. The author also learned a great deal as a result of the observations of Dr. David Kalupahana, for which he is grateful.

CHAPTER II

Criticisms of Northern Ch'an Meditation

> When Ts'ao-chi [Hui-neng] saw someone seated in cross-legged meditation, he took his staff and beat the person until he got up.
>
> Tsung-mi (780-841)[1]

Introduction

In the Southern Ch'an texts there are numerous attacks upon the alleged meditation practices of Shen-hsiu and his disciples. Not only are there attacks by Hui-neng[2] and his disciple, Ho-tsê Shen-hui, but many others including the founder of the Lin-chi school, Lin-chi I-hsüan, also attack these same meditation practices.[3]

The most common criticism is the accusation that Northern Ch'an advocated and practiced a form of quietistic

meditation. This claim has been clear from the very earliest times up until the present.[4] The most likely source for this criticism is the Platform Sutra, which states:

> The deluded man . . . [thinks] that straightforward mind is sitting without moving and casting aside delusions without letting things arise in the mind. . . . This kind of practice is the same as insentiency and the cause of an obstruction to Tao.[5]

Even Lin-chi I-hsüan criticizes Northern Ch'an as quietistic:

> There are bald-headed and blind [monks] who, after eating rice and satisfying their hunger, immediately sit in meditation to look into their [mental] activities and arrest their thoughts so that the latter cannot arise again. These people hate disturbance and seek quiet; this is the way of heretics.[6]

Attacks upon Northern Ch'an meditation methods are scattered throughout the literature of the Southern line. The attacks are easy to recognize because Northern Ch'an techniques tend to be described almost identically in each place they are mentioned. For example, in a dialogue with a scholar named Yüan, Ho-tsê Shen-hui is asked whether the doctrines of Shen-hsiu are different from those of Hui-neng. Ho-tsê Shen-hui replies:

> Their teachings are not the same.
>
> Again Yüan asked: "Since they studied together under the same teacher [Hung-jen], why are they not the same?"
>
> Shen-hui replied: "The reason why I now say that they are not the same is because Ch'an master Shen-hsiu teaches people as follows:
> To concentrate the mind and enter concentration;
> To settle the mind and behold (k'an) its purity;
> To arouse the mind to illumine the external world;
> To control the mind and seek inner realization.[7]
> It is due to this that they are not the same."[8]

In another passage, Ho-tsê Shen-hui attributes the same practices to P'u-chi and Hsiang-mo, who were disciples of Shen-hsiu and important masters in their own right in the Northern line of Ch'an:

> [The reason there are disagreements between my teachings and those of Northern Ch'an is that] they teach seated meditation, teach people to concentrate their minds and enter concentration, to settle their minds and behold purity, to arouse their minds to illuminate the external world; to control their minds for inner realization, and indicate these to be their teachings.[9]

Another description of Northern Ch'an meditation practices is found in the Platform Sutra:

> Good friends, some people teach men to sit viewing the mind[10] and viewing purity,[11] not moving[12] and not activating the mind, and to this they devote their efforts. Deluded people do not realize that this is wrong, cling to this doctrine, and become confused. . . . Those who instruct in this way are, from the outset, greatly mistaken.[13]

Numerous other descriptions like those above can be found in the Platform Sutra and in the writings of Ho-tsê Shen-hui. However, rather than continue repeating essentially similar descriptions, they will be summarized instead. The followers of Northern Ch'an are alleged to advocate and practice the following:

(1) One ought to practice seated meditation, at least at some stage during one's practice.

(2) One ought to concentrate one's mind in order to enter a state of concentration (ting 定).

(3) One ought to settle the mind in order to behold (k'an)

its purity, or to preserve its serenity.

(4) At some stage, one ought to arouse the mind in such a way that it illuminates outwardly, or in such a way that it unifies the external realm.[14]

(5) One ought to control the mind (*she hsin* 攝心) in order to bring about an inner realization.

(6) One ought to practice attaining a state described as "being undisturbed" or "unmoving" (*wu-tung*).

The above six practices are basic methods utilized by Northern Ch'an according to the Southern line's texts. The criticisms of the Southern masters seem aimed at these six practices almost exclusively. The objections which the Southern line expressed against these six practices may be summarized as follows:

1. This is a quietistic form of meditation.
2. The practice of seated meditation is rejected.
3. The Northern Ch'an meditation techniques are established upon a dualistic base.

Before dealing with the objections, first we must ascertain whether the description offered by Southern Ch'an texts is even remotely accurate. If the description were to be inaccurate, then Southern Ch'an criticisms would be based upon a false picture and would not correspond to actual meditation practices in Northern Ch'an. If that were so, then we would not need to spend much time with the criticisms because it would be already established that they were wrong.

The Meditation Practices of Northern Ch'an

There are no existent texts which might correspond to a detailed manual of meditation practices in Northern Ch'an; at least no such texts among those discovered recently in Northern China. In all likelihood, the basic techniques of meditation in the monasteries of Northern Ch'an masters were taught to the beginner by one of the senior monks and were not learned from written materials. Inasmuch as this part of the instruction could be imparted by a monk who had not yet attained the final goal, there would always be a surfeit of teachers available. Those who would want to learn this would go to a Northern Ch'an temple, and, upon acceptance into the *saṅgha*, would probably be assigned a meditation teacher immediately. There would be no reason for the Northern teachers to write down the specific techniques employed. We might hesitantly surmise that their practices were not particularly unique, and probably were similar to the methods utilized in the other schools of Chinese Buddhism.

In the absence of detailed manuals spelling out such practices, we will be forced to infer many of the details of Northern Ch'an meditation practices. However, for our purposes, it is not necessary to know all the details--we do not need an exhaustive study of all aspects and details of their meditation. We simply need to know enough to determine the following two points: (1) if any of their practices were

like the ones attributed to Northern Ch'an by the Southern texts; (2) whether these practices can be shown to be exempt from the criticisms of the South if they are similar to the practices attributed to the North by the South.

There are numerous passages in Northern Ch'an texts which refer to meditation practice, but specific details are not supplied usually. For example, at the beginning of the <u>Ta-ch'eng wu-sheng fang-pien men</u>, it is stated:

> Each of you must resolve to sit in cross-legged meditation (<u>chia-fu tso</u> 跏趺坐). To identify [oneself with] the mind of a son of the Buddha which is perfectly undisturbed (<u>wu-tung</u>) is called "purity."[15]

The text amplifies upon this in a subsequent paragraph:

> If you behold (<u>k'an</u> 看) the mind, and if it is pure, it is called "the realm of the pure mind." You should not focus inwardly upon body-mind, and you should not focus outwardly your body-mind. There should be a relaxed, vast, and far-reaching inspecting (<u>k'an</u>), an inspecting which everywhere encompasses the empty sky . . . .[16]

If this were not enough to show that Northern Ch'an masters encouraged the practice of seated meditation, the following description of Tsung-mi (d. 841) makes it clear:

> Further, you must clearly understand the entering into the realm of Ch'an by <u>upāya</u>. Remove yourself far from the confusion and noise, seclude yourself in a quiet place, control your body and control your breathing, sit quietly in a cross-legged meditation posture. Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Your mind should be focused upon one thing. The disciples of . . . Shen-hsiu in the north . . . and others are all of this variety [of practice].[17]

In addition to these cross-legged practices, Northern Ch'an monks were taught to 'behold,' or 'inspect' (<u>k'an</u> 看)

their mind, and to behold its purity. This practice seems to be related to another technique described in Northern Ch'an texts as "controlling (she 攝) the mind," and "clear contemplation (observation) of the mind" (kuan hsin 觀心). When asked, "What method should be cultivated to seek the Buddha Way?" Shen-hsiu replied, "Simply cultivate the single method (fa 法) of clear contemplation of mind. It includes all methods."[18] The questioner is sceptical and asks how, by merely contemplating mind, one can achieve an end to the major obstacles such as the Six Paths of Rebirth and the Three Realms. Shen-hsiu replies to the questioner:

> . . . one knows that all good karma arises due to one's own mind. Simply be able to control (she) the mind and you will be free from falsehood and evil. The karma working for rebirth in the Three Realms and Six Paths of Rebirth will naturally, of itself, cease and be extinguished. To be able to extinguish all duḥkha is liberation.[19]

The questioner is unconvinced, and argues that the Buddha spoke of struggling for enlightenment for Three Great Aeons in order to achieve Buddhahood. How could it be achieved so quickly and easily by the mere contemplation of mind? Shen-hsiu replies by claiming that the Buddha used "Three Great Aeons" as a metaphor for the Three Poisons of anger, craving, and ignorance, which are within the mind of man. "If you can discard craving, ignorance, and anger, which are the three varieties of the poisons of mind, this is called 'salvation achieved after Three Great Aeons'."[20] Thus, at least one of the methods of Northern Ch'an meditation is the

controlling of the mind, which results in the meditator being "free from falsehood and evil." However, the picture is more complex than this suggests. In order to control the mind, Northern Ch'an texts emphasize that the six senses are a key ingredient because what comes in via the senses is at least one major cause of mental disturbance. The mind must be controlled in order to control the disturbances which are generated by the mind's uncontrolled reaction to the sensory input. This comes out clearly in the following passage from the same text, where the questioner summarizes what Shen-hsiu has already said, and then asks for more elaboration:

> You say that if we desire to grasp the pure Buddha, we must purify our own minds. And, to be in accord with that mind which is pure is the Buddha's Pure Land . . . . Now you speak of the six senses being pure and clear. . . . [In the light of all this], what is the meaning of the six pāramitā of the Bodhisattva?

Shen-hsiu responds to the question as follows:

> If you desire to cultivate the six pāramitā, you must purify the six senses. If you desire to purify the six senses, you must first get rid of the Six Thieves [the six senses when the mind is attached to its perceptions]. If you can cast out the 'Eye-Thief,' you will be free from all realms of form, and the mind will be free from stinginess. This is what we call 'charity' [the first of the six pāramitā].[21]

Shen-hsiu explains the other five pāramitā in the same manner, advising the questioner to cast out the 'Hearing-Thief,' the 'Taste-Thief,' etc. And, then he says:

> If you forever cast off the Three Poisons and constantly purify the six senses, body and mind [become] deep and clear, and within and without are pure and clear.[22]

Again:

> The Way is Awakening, and this is cultivating all the practices of Awakening; moderating and subduing the six senses. Pure practice for a long time without ceasing is called 'practicing the Way during the six periods of the day'.[23]

All of the above have been clear references to some sort of meditative practices, but we lack specific details. Shen-hsiu does speak explicitly of some practices, such as fasting, but he describes them in such a way that it is clear that they are given a symbolic interpretation and are not to be interpreted in only a literal manner:

> What we call 'fasting' is controlling the body and mind, not allowing them to disperse or become agitated . . . . One certainly must restrain the six passions, and one certainly must govern the Three Poisons, diligently investigating the pure body and mind.[24]

Again there is the advocation of control of body and mind, by not allowing them to become agitated or unfocused. It is clear that this is an important element in Northern Ch'an meditative exercises. For one who can follow these methods or practice, Shen-hsiu promises great rewards:

> Simply be able to control the mind for inner illumination, and realize that insight is constantly shining. You will be free from the six poisons which will be eternally destroyed, the Six Thieves will not be allowed to cause disturbances, and, of themselves, merits will be accumulated . . . .[25]

This statement is important for it informs us that one of the goals of meditation was the "control of the mind for inner illumination, and the realization of insight for external clarity."[26] Achieving this is attaining the state called

"mind and body undisturbed." That this is central to the practice of concentration (ting) is clear from the following:

> If you do not achieve the expedient means (upāya) [of being] truly undisturbed (wu-tung), you are truly disturbed, fall into a false concentration, become greedily attached to the flavor of meditation (ch'an 禪), and fall into the Nirvana of the Two Vehicles. Being undisturbed is that by means of which you can attain the expedient means of correct concentration, which is perfect tranquillity (yüan chi 圓寂), and this is the Great Nirvana [as taught by the Mahayana tradition].[27]

As the previous quotations demonstrate, at some stage (just beginners?), monks sit in a cross-legged posture, and, once seated, practice the 'inspection,' or 'beholding' of their minds. This may be similar to the practice previously described as the clear contemplation (observation) of the mind (kuan hsin). In addition, at some stage, the monks practice the control of body and mind, which results in a state described as being perfectly undisturbed.

There are numerous questions which arise when one considers the preceding descriptions. It is not clear whether the practice of 'inspecting mind' and 'inspecting purity' (k'an ching) cause the mind to become pure, or whether one is practicing simply to recognize the already present innate purity of one's own mind. Considering the texts upon which Northern Ch'an relied, it is most likely the latter. In addition, the practice of inspecting described so far sounds like a passive introspective technique; however, this is not just the simple focusing of one's attention

inwardly. The Northern Ch'an master explains:

> If you inspect the mind, and if it is pure, it is called the realm of the pure mind. You should not focus inwardly upon body-mind, and you should not focus outwardly your body-mind. There should be a relaxed, vast, and far-reaching inspecting (k'an), an inspecting which everywhere encompasses the empty sky . . . .

And again:

> Inspecting (k'an) is oriented towards what is before one and is far-reaching; inspecting is oriented towards what is behind one and is far-reaching; inspecting simultaneously encompasses everywhere in the four directions, up and down; inspecting encompasses empty space; inspecting continuously uses the pure mind's eye; inspecting in which one is not cut off nor worried about how much time is spent. In one who has achieved this, body and mind are harmonized and function unobstructedly.[28]

Clearly this practice of inspecting is not exclusively oriented inwardly, and certainly does not seem describable by any sort of passive term such as "trance-like." The practice does not seem to be for the absolute beginner, for he would most likely experience great difficulty in trying to attain or maintain this state for very long. Although this kind of inspecting is described as cross-legged sitting,[29] it seems as though it could just as easily be a mental state maintained independent of physical position. If one were a follower of the Northern Ch'an tradition, the above description would undoubtedly be sufficient to remind the disciple of the details of the techniques utilized.

In subsequent passages from the same text, we find several new elements being brought into the picture. The text states:

> Body and mind not arising is constantly maintaining awareness of (shou 守) the true mind. . . . Mind not arising is the mind of true Suchness; form not arising is form as true Suchness. Because mind is true Suchness, mind is emancipated; because form is true Suchness, forms are emancipated. Mind and forms both free (li), then there is not a single thing, and this is the great Bodhi tree.[30]

As with the preceding passages, this raises numerous questions concerning its proper interpretation. How is the state of "body and mind not arising" to be brought about? Is it the result of specific mental or physical exercises, or the result of the "inspecting" advocated so strongly in the previous paragraph? Perhaps this is not to be brought about at all, but is simply to be recognized, or realized? Is this the natural state of mind and body, or is it only a temporary state attained as a result of mental manipulation and techniques of meditation? The sentence suggests the latter interpretation by its use of the term shou 守, which was translated "maintaining awareness of," but which can also be translated "keeping guard upon." In the second sense, the passage could be interpreted as saying that through maintaining a state of constant mental vigilance, one can keep the mind and body from arising. This would then imply some effort required to achieve the state, and perhaps the same effort to maintain the state. However, an alternate interpretation is also available. The practice could be a natural awareness which persists independent of mental exertion after being achieved--this might be similar to the

practice of "mindfulness," common to all Buddhism.

Based upon our discussion of the meditation practices of Northern Ch'an, it can now be determined whether the Southern description is accurate or not. On pages 13 and 14, six points of criticism were listed. Those six points were:

(1) One ought to practice seated meditation, at least at some stage of one's practice.

As has been demonstrated, Northern Ch'an texts do advocate the practice of cross-legged meditation (*chia-fu tso* 跏趺坐).

(2) One ought to concentrate one's mind in order to enter a state of concentration (*ting* 定).

Northern Ch'an texts did advocate the practice of "correct concentration,"[31] but, in none of the texts studied do we find anything which seems to correspond precisely to "concentrating one's mind" (*ning hsin* 凝心).

(3) One ought to settle the mind in order to behold its purity.

As has been shown, Northern texts do mention the practice of 'beholding,' or 'inspecting' purity (*k'an ching* 看淨), and also the "clear observation of mind" (*kuan hsin* 觀心). Although we did

not find any passages which might be interpreted as advocating the "settling of the mind" (*chu hsin* 住心), it is possible that the practice of being undisturbed (*wu-tung* 無動) could be what the Southern texts refer to.

(4) At some stage, one ought to arouse the mind in such a way that it illumines outwardly (*wai chao* 外照).

None of the Northern Ch'an texts mentions arousing the mind (*ch'i hsin* 起心), but they do speak of "realizing insight which outwardly illuminates" (*wai ming* 外明).[32] Perhaps "arousing the mind" is a reference to the Northern Ch'an practice of "facing before, facing behind, a far-off inspecting . . ."[33]

(5) One ought to control the mind in order to bring about an inner realization (*nei ch'eng* 內證).

This is almost a direct quotation from Shen-hsiu's *Kuan-hsin lun*, with the sole difference found in the last character in the phrase. The *Kuan-hsin lun* states: "Simply be able to control the mind (*she hsin* 攝心) for inner illumination (*nei chao* 內照)."[34]

(6) One ought to attempt to attain a state of being 'undisturbed' or 'unmoving' (*wu-tung* 無動).

The practice of being undisturbed (*wu-tung*) is advocated throughout the texts of Northern Ch'an, although we have not yet determined what this technical term

meant to the practitioners of Northern Ch'an. Without further investigation, we certainly would not be justified in assuming that this refers to a physical practice of keeping the body perfectly still (as Southern Ch'an seems to have understood the phrase).[35] We shall discuss this at greater length in the next section.

The description of meditation practices offered by Southern Ch'an, although not accurate in each and every detail, is close enough to justify our acceptance of it as showing that Southern Ch'an has not invented these simply for purposes of criticism. They are an approximate description of the actual meditation practices in Northern Ch'an. However, that the descriptions correspond does not mean that the Southern Ch'an text's understanding of these practices is in fact correct. Nor does it follow that the Southern Ch'an criticisms are accurate.

If the Southern Ch'an descriptions could have been shown to be completely incorrect, we might have been able simply to discard their objections because they would not have applied to actual Northern Ch'an practices. However, the Northern Ch'an practices are close enough to the techniques described and criticized by Southern Ch'an that we shall be forced to consider the accuracy of the various criticisms.

OBJECTION 1: THE TECHNIQUES ARE QUIETISTIC

The expression 'quietistic' is capable of several interpretations, and we shall have to separate the different meanings of the term before we can establish whether any of them do apply to Northern Ch'an. There seem to be two different but related meanings possible for 'quietism': (1) total sensory withdrawal, trance; (2) non-participation in the affairs of the world, passivity.

The most common interpretation of 'quietistic' is the first and strongest sense. To call a meditative practice quietistic would imply that "all the life processes are reversed, turned topsy-turvey, taken out of the realm of nature; breathing is stopped as far as possible, thinking stopped, hearing stopped, seeing stopped, and so on -- in a word, everything is transformed."[36] Did the Northern Ch'an masters actually recommend that a student should try to attain such a state where the monk becomes completely oblivious to all external phenomena? This does seem to be the basis of Hui-neng's criticism of Northern Ch'an when he says that "This kind of practice [Northern Ch'an] is the same as insentiency and the cause of an obstruction to the Tao."[37]

This is an easy criticism to respond to, because it can be unequivocally demonstrated that Northern Ch'an did not encourage this kind of total sensory withdrawal. In the longest of the Northern Ch'an philosophical texts, the Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien pei-tsung, it states:

> Question: What is "being free from thinking" (*li nien* 離念)?
> Reply: To be free from thinking is to be undisturbed (*wu-tung*). Being undisturbed is the expedient means (*upāya*) of awakening pure awareness from concentration (*ting* 定), which is the opening of the gateway of pure awareness (*hui* 慧). Hearing is pure awareness. This skillful means is not merely awakening pure awareness, but it is also correct concentration, and this is opening the gateway of inner insight (*chih* 智), and you will certainly achieve insight. [However], if you are unable to achieve this method, then correct concentration will degenerate into an incorrect concentration. One becomes attached to the flavor of meditation (*ch'an*) and falls into the Nirvana of the [followers of the] Two Vehicles.[38]

The difference between "correct concentration" and "incorrect concentration" is quite relevant to the issue of quietism. In a subsequent paragraph found in the *Ta-ch'eng wu-shen fang-pien men*, we find the following dialogue:

> Question: How many types of people are there who open and achieve the gateway of *prajñā* (*chih-hui* 智慧)?
> Reply: There are three kinds of people. Who are they? They are the ordinary person, the [follower of the] Two Vehicles, and the Bodhisattva. For the ordinary person, when there exists a sound, there is hearing, and when there is no sound, or when the sound has diminished into inaudibility, there is no hearing. For the [follower of the] Two Vehicles, whether there is sound, or no sound, or sound which has diminished into inaudibility, there is no hearing. For the Bodhisattva, whether there is sound or no sound, or a sound which has diminished into inaudibility, he constantly hears.[39]

This interesting metaphor, borrowed from the *Nirvāna sūtra*, makes clear the ultimate distinction between "correct concentration" and "incorrect concentration." Those called the "followers of the Two Vehicles"[40] practice what the Northern Ch'an texts describe as "incorrect concentration," and its precise nature is revealed in the next passage:

> The follower of the Two Vehicles succeeds in opening and achieving the gateway of pure awareness (hui). [His] hearing is pure awareness. From within the confines of his sense-of-hearing, he awakens and attains pure sensory awareness [in his] hearing. That which in the past he did not hear, now he is able to hear, and [within his] mind is produced great joy. [But he perceives this] great joy as a disturbance (tung 動), and he is fearful of disturbance. Being attached to non-disturbance, he extinguishes the six consciousnesses and realizes the Nirvana of emptiness and extinction. This is the reason that whether there is a sound, or no sound, or a sound diminishing into inaudibility, he does not hear. Not hearing, he is greedily attached to the flavor of meditation (ch'an 禪) and falls into the Nirvana of the followers of the Two Vehicles . . . [On the other hand, the Bodhisattva] recognizes that the six senses are fundamentally and originally undisturbed (wu-tung). Being constantly in accord with this non-disturbance [in his] practice and cultivation, he attains this expedient means, and his correct concentration is identical with the achievement of perfect tranquillity, and this is Great Nirvana.[41]

Here the distinction is clearly made, for according to this Northern Ch'an text, the follower of the Two Vehicles is one who achieves a precarious state of balance, and fearful of losing this, he closes off all sensory awareness through meditative techniques. One in this state does not respond to external stimuli while in the state of concentration, and this is precisely what is meant by "incorrect concentration." On the other hand, the Bodhisattva realizes that the six senses are undisturbed in their most fundamental nature, and consequently such a person is undisturbed in all of his doings. This is "correct concentration." Questioned further about differences between the two, the master responded:

> [That which the followers of the] Two Vehicles [do, namely] extinguish the six senses and experience the Nirvana of emptiness and extinction, is incorrect concentration.

> The Bodhisattva knows that the six senses are from the very beginning fundamentally undisturbed, and whether there are sounds or no sounds, or sounds diminished away, he constantly hears. This is true concentration.

Again:

> The concentration of the followers of the Two Vehicles which lacks awareness [of externals] is called "incorrect." The Bodhisattva's concentration which possesses pure awareness is called "correct."[42]

In another text, in the context of a discussion concerning the proper way to understand being 'undisturbed,' a very clear restatement of the same point can be found:

> The followers of the Two Vehicles conceive of (chien 見) being undisturbed as something external to their minds, and so thought arises and [also] attachment to being undisturbed. They control their five senses, and the six consciousnesses are not [allowed to be] active -- this is the corrupt 'being undisturbed' of the Hinayana.[43]

Obviously the Northern Ch'an masters were strongly opposed to meditative practices which were quietistic in this sense. As the master says in a subsequent passage:

> The followers of the Two Vehicles leave [the state of] concentration (ting) and [it is only then that they] hear; entering into concentration, they do not hear. Entering into concentration, they are without pure awareness (hui), are not able to explain the Dharma, and so are unable to save sentient beings.[44]

It is clear that Northern Ch'an rejected these forms of quietistic meditation in no uncertain terms. Anyone who followed a quietistic and introverted kind of meditation practice which closed off all incoming stimuli, abiding in a kind of mental blankness and non-awareness, is practicing a "false concentration" and is criticized as being a follower of Hinayana. As is very clear, to be 'undisturbed' is

definitely not associated with this sort of quietistic practice. It cannot be interpreted as a passive sitting quietly, for this is condemned by Northern Ch'an as well.

The Northern Ch'an masters were well aware of the problems implicit in quietistic forms of meditation, and they condemned quietism unqualifiedly. They identified their own practices with those of the Bodhisattva who maintains a state of constant awareness, someone who, in the midst of his correct concentration, is still able to explain the Dharma and help to save sentient beings. Those who practice quietistic meditation are condemned as being unable to do this.

On the basis of the preceding analysis, we seem justified in concluding that Northern Ch'an did not practice a quietistic meditation in the sense of sensory withdrawal. They condemned such practices just as strongly as did Southern Ch'an.

There is another related objection: that the followers of Northern Ch'an stress meditational states which are quietistic in the sense discussed above (while in this state the meditator is absorbed in emptiness, insensible, and of no use to anyone), but upon leaving the meditational state the student is unable to carry over his experience into the ordinary world. One might say that the meditator perceives that "forms are emptiness" but not that "emptiness is forms." While in meditation the student abides in a passive emptiness, but this has no influence upon the monk's ordinary unenlightened response to the world. The clearest statement

of this criticism is found in the Platform Sermon of Ho-tsê Shen-hui:

> Concentration (ting) arises from the mind which does not fall into making discriminations. To just "concentrate the mind to enter concentration" is to fall into an indeterminate emptiness, and after one leaves this state of concentration, there arises the mind which discriminates all things in the world in a calculative manner. They consider this prajñā, but in the sutras this is called the illusion [obscured] mind. In their case, when there is prajñā, there is no concentration, and when there is concentration, prajñā is absent. All who understand it in this way cannot separate themselves from the passions. "Settling the mind to behold its purity," "arousing the mind to illumine outwardly," "controlling the mind for inner realization," does not release the mind; this teaching binds the mind.[45]

Ho-tsê Shen-hui seems to be accusing Northern Ch'an followers of practicing quietistic meditation such that the student attains only temporary psychological states which do not carry over into non-meditative life, and which have no connection with the real goal of Ch'an Buddhism, which is spiritual freedom. In addition, the Northern Ch'an practices are alleged to encourage either concentration or prajñā, but always one to the exclusion of the other.

Although the Northern line of Ch'an certainly did practice the sorts of techniques alluded to by Ho-tsê Shen-hui, as we have seen, it is clear that the Northern line does not understand these practices to imply what Ho-tsê Shen-hui suggests. In fact, Northern Ch'an texts criticize precisely the same practices as Ho-tse Shen-hui. Their writings make it clear that this kind of understanding is that of the inferior practitioners, the "followers of the Two Vehicles,"

and not their own disciples. In a discussion concerning the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra, in the Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien pei-tsung, the Northern Ch'an master remarks:

> The followers of the Two Vehicles have concentration without prajñā, or they have prajñā without concentration, and thus they cannot get far enough [to understand the 'Wondrous Dharma' of the Lotus sutra]. The concentration and prajñā of the Bodhisattva and Mahasattva is perfectly balanced and this is why they can get this far.[46]

Here the Northern Ch'an texts are criticizing the practices of those Chinese monks whom they label "followers of the Two Vehicles," and yet these are the same practices for which Ho-tsê Shen-hui has criticized the Northern Ch'an monks. The above passage, and others in a similar vein, clearly demonstrates that Northern Ch'an followers were aware of the numerous ways possible to misapply the practice of concentration, and they condemned such practices as vigorously as did Southern Ch'an. Ho-tsê Shen-hui condemned these kinds of practices as leading one to "fall into an indeterminate emptiness" (wu-chi k'ung 無記空),[47] and Northern Ch'an condemns these as leading to a Nirvana of "emptiness and extinction."[48]

On the basis of the above, we seem justified in concluding that this particular objection is simply unfounded. Northern Ch'an condemned the same practices that Southern Ch'an did, and apparently for similar reasons. Any Northern Ch'an monks who practiced this kind of quietistic meditation would be going against the teachings found in the writings of their own teachers.

We have not yet discussed another sense of "quietism," that which implies that people who practice these meditation techniques spent their time passively, doing meditation to the exclusion of everything else, and as a consequence could not participate in worldly affairs. This would be especially wrong because a person who spent his life in quiet sitting could not actively pursue the work of the Bodhisattva, who participates fully in the world in order to help all sentient beings.

We have seen that Northern Ch'an condemned the practice of excessive meditation leading to sensory withdrawal, and we have no evidence that the Northern line practiced seated concentration to the exclusion of all else. In fact, the historical evidence shows that the Northern line was very active in political activities as well as Buddhist activities; if anything, the Northern line might be criticized for being too much a participant in worldly affairs, but cannot be justifiably criticized for ignoring the world.

OBJECTION 2: THE ENTIRE PRACTICE OF SEATED MEDITATION IS TO BE REJECTED.

This popular understanding of Hui-neng's position is troublesome, and would result in some very unusual consequences if true. It would amount to a total rejection of the common practice of seated meditation.[49] This second objection says that Southern Ch'an attacks upon Northern Ch'an meditation techniques were only a reflection of the more general attack upon the entire practice of seated meditation. That this was in fact the position of Hui-neng and the Platform Sutra is suggested by a cursory reading of the text. For example, this interpretation seems implied in the following passage:

> Hsueh Chien said: "All the Ch'an Masters in the capital [Northern Ch'an] say that if one wants to gain an understanding of the Way one must practice sitting in meditation. Without Ch'an meditation there is as yet no one who has gained emancipation. I wonder what your opinion of this is?"
>
> The Master answered: "The Way is realized through the mind. What should it have to do with a sitting posture! ... Ultimately there is nothing to prove. So why bother with a sitting posture?"[50]

In addition, we have the testimony of Tsung-mi that, "when Ts'ao-chi [Hui-neng] saw someone in cross-legged meditation, he took a staff and beat the person until he got up."[51] A similar objection is raised by Ho-tsê Shen-hui in his Shen-hui yü-lu where, utilizing a description of the practices of Northern Ch'an, he says:

> For those who, sitting, concentrate their minds in order to enter concentration, settle their minds in order to behold purity, arouse their minds to illumine the external world, control their minds and seek inner realization -- all of these practices are obstacles to Bodhi. Now, as long as one does not possess union with Bodhi, from where could one obtain deliverance? It is certainly not in staying seated![52]

This quotation raises the objection that if these practices are believed to be the same thing as Enlightenment, then the practitioner has made a terrible mistake for Enlightenment itself is already fundamentally found within all sentient beings (pen chüeh 本覺), and this has nothing to do with a sitting posture. This is not the same as a general condemnation of all seated meditation practices. Instead, this suggests that what is being condemned is an improper understanding of the function of sitting meditation. This interpretation is also attributable to Hui-neng as well, and can be supported by a passage which purports to quote Hui-neng's last instructions to his disciples. Near death, Hui-neng advises them as follows:

> Be the same as you would if I were here, and sit all together in meditation. If you are only peacefully calm and quiet, without motion, without stillness, without birth, without destruction, without coming, without going, without judgments of right and wrong, without staying and without going -- this then is the Great Way.[53]

Here Hui-neng is not condemning the practice of sitting in meditation -- indeed, he is recommending it. And, in addition to the above statement, we know that seated meditation was practiced in the temple of Hui-neng's own teacher, the

Fifth Patriarch Hung-jen.[54] And, as we have seen, seated meditation was practiced and encouraged in the Northern line of Ch'an. In fact, as far as we can tell, seated meditation seems to have been an essential element in Ch'an practice from the earliest times (e.g., Bodhidharma's practice of sitting for nine years facing the wall) up until the present day in China and Japan. It is extremely difficult to account for Hui-neng's position if we understand him to be issuing a blanket condemnation of the practice of seated meditation.

Consequently, it seems most likely that Hui-neng's words should be construed as an attack upon a particular interpretation of the practice of seated meditation. The implication is that there are people who practice seated meditation and believe that the trance-like mental states attainable are in fact Enlightenment itself. This is vigorously attacked by the Southern line of Ch'an.

Even if the Southern line of Hui-neng and Shen-hui were understood as condemning all seated meditation practices, we could not find any justification for this view on philosophical grounds because the claim would seem to be empirical: namely, that such practices do not lead to emancipation.

So, concerning this second objection, it is true that Northern Ch'an advocated the practice of sitting in meditation, but apparently Hui-neng himself also advocated this. However, we have suggested that the criticisms of Southern Ch'an on this point can be most constructively interpreted

as an attack upon an incorrect way of understanding the goal of seated meditation. Namely, if sitting with the mind in a trance-like state of blankness is interpreted as Enlightenment, then this is an error and those who understand it in this way are mistaken. However, we have found no evidence that Northern Ch'an ever implied such a position, and the objection in this form has already been considered in the previous section and shown to be unjustified. So, on this count as well, Northern Ch'an must be judged to be not guilty of the misinterpretation which Southern Ch'an attributed to it.

OBJECTION 3: NORTHERN CH'AN MEDITATION PRACTICES IMPLY A DUALISM.

This is another criticism of Northern Ch'an found in the Platform Sutra and in the writings of Ho-tsê Shen-hui. It is clearly stated in the following passage:

> Students, be careful not to say that meditation gives rise to wisdom, or that wisdom gives rise to meditation, or that meditation and wisdom are different from each other. To hold this view implies that things have duality -- if good is spoken while the mind is not good, meditation and wisdom will not be alike.[55]

Another statement of Hui-neng's from the Transmission of the Lamp makes essentially the same charge. It is clear that it is specific Northern Ch'an practices which are being condemned because the text mentions 'beholding purity,' which we

know was attributed to Northern Ch'an by the Southern school, and which we know was practiced in Northern Ch'an. Hui-neng says:

> This Dharma is not dual; neither is the mind. This Tao is pure and has no form at all. Take care not to contemplate purity or to make the mind empty. The mind is from the outset pure; there is nothing you must grasp or throw away.[56]

Tsung-mi quotes Shen-hui's objection to Northern Ch'an's implied duality when he claims that they divide up the mind into perceiver and perceived. Tsung-mi writes:

> Master Ho-tsê [Shen-hui] said: If one concentrates the mind, this is a mistake. This is the reason that 'beholding mind' as taught by the Northern line misses the real understanding. If mind were something which could be beheld, it would be an object. Thus, here we say that it is not the case that mind is an object.[57]

Echoing Tsung-mi, D.T. Suzuki says, ". . . because the Northern school's methods of practice and speculation were both of a dualistic nature . . . the Northern school was incompatible with the Southern line."[58] Inasmuch as the issue raised here by Tsung-mi and Hui-neng is only one aspect of a more general charge, i.e. that Northern Ch'an's whole approach was dualistic, we shall temporarily set aside this objection and consider it in greater detail in chapter four.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have dealt with those objections to Northern Ch'an meditation practices which allowed for at least a partially philosophical analysis. We are not in a

position to deal with objections concerning the actual efficacy of the Northern Ch'an meditation techniques, for this issue is one which is in principle empirically resolvable -- an empirical study could theoretically resolve the issue by simply finding out who followed these methods, and then determining whether such people actually achieved the spiritual freedom which is the goal of Ch'an. Two of the three common objections to Northern Ch'an practices have been analyzed, and shown to be unjustified based upon the actual writings of Northern Ch'an. The Northern Ch'an meditation practices have been demonstrated to be not quietistic in the sense of advocating sensory withdrawal. Northern Ch'an methods condemned this vigorously. We have also seen that Northern Ch'an methods did not advocate quiet sitting to the point of non-participation in worldly affairs, for this too they condemned as the practices of Hinayanists. They clearly advocated a Bodhisattva practice where, in the midst of his concentration (ting), the Bodhisattva is still able to teach the Dharma and save sentient beings. The mere fact that Northern Ch'an flourished in the capital demonstrates that it could not be accused of being attached to a quiet mountaintop setting.

Finally, if we interpret Southern Ch'an criticisms as simply objecting to the fact that Northern Ch'an practiced seated meditation, we must find Northern Ch'an guilty, but we don't need to regard this as an objection at all. In

fact, I have argued that this is not a very helpful way to interpret the criticisms of Hui-neng, Shen-hui and Lin-chi, and if interpreted in other ways, the criticisms can be shown to fail. In addition, even Tsung-mi considers the possibility of a blanket rejection of seated meditation, and he denies the validity of this interpretation. He writes as follows:

> . . . how can one condemn their gradual doctrine of stopping illusions, beholding purity, continually polishing away the dust, concentrating mind and settling the mind, focusing upon one object, practicing cross-legged sitting, regulating the body and regulating one's breathing, etc.? These various expedient means (upāya) are encouraged and praised by the Buddha. The Vimalakīrti sūtra says, "It is not necessary to sit." It does not say that "it is necessary not to sit!"[59]

In other words, there is no justification for interpreting the words of the Vimalakīrti sūtra[60] as a condemnation of the practice of seated meditation advocated by Northern Ch'an. The practices may not be absolutely essential, but one cannot conclude from this that it is necessary NOT to practice these various upāya. First of all, this would be a logical error, and, secondly, it would not be in accord with the teachings of the Buddha expressed in the sutras. As Tsung-mi's statement has so clearly pointed out, we cannot understand the Southern Ch'an criticisms of Northern Ch'an as a simple condemnation of all seated meditation practices. And, in addition, it seems unlikely that Hui-neng would have been advocating anything so radical which went against the practices of his own teacher, his Ch'an tradition, and against the practices of almost all the other Chinese

Buddhist schools.

For the above reasons, I believe that the criticisms of Southern Ch'an against Northern Ch'an meditation practices are shown not to be justified. Quietism, however interpreted, is not an error of which the Northern line can be found guilty. The last criticism, that Northern Ch'an meditative methods are based upon a fundamentally dualistic view of Buddhist doctrines, has been temporarily set aside until the entire issue of dualisms can be discussed in detail, in chapter four.

FOOTNOTES

1. Tsung-mi, *Ch'an-yüan chu-ch'üan-chi tu-hsü*, ed. by Kamata Shigeo, Tokyo, 1961, p. 59

2. For purposes of discussion we will refer to the author of the *Platform Sutra* as "Hui-neng," even though recent studies have cast doubt upon the claim that the text represents the actual words of Hui-neng.

3. T 47 (1985) 499b13. The passage is translated below.

4. For example, D.T. Suzuki's *Zen Doctrine of No-Mind* states: "This dust-wiping attitude of Shen-hsiu and his followers inevitably leads to the quietistic method of meditation, and it was indeed the method which they recommended." (p. 18)

5. Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, pp. 136-7.

6. T 47 (1985) 499b13; cf. also *Chueh-yüeh lu* ("Record of the Finger [Pointing at] the Moon"), vol. 2, Taiwan, 1968, pp. 1036-37. The passage is translated by Charles Luk in his *Ch'an and Zen Teachings*, Second Series, London: Rider & Co., 1961, p. 125.

7. These four phrases are quoted repeatedly, but are somewhat cryptic and permit varying translations. Hu Shih has rendered them into English as follows:

   Concentrating the mind in order to enter dhyana;
   Settling the mind in that state by watching its forms of purity;
   Arousing the mind to shine in insight;
   Controlling the mind for its inner verification.

   (Hu Shih, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 7).

   Yampolsky translates the last two lines:

   Stimulate the mind to illuminate the external;
   Control the mind to demonstrate the internal.

   (*Platform Sutra*, pp. 32-3).

   The Chinese characters for these four verses are:

   凝心入定
   住心看淨
   起心外照
   攝心內證

8. Hu Shih, Shen-hui ho-shang i-chi, p. 285.

9. Ibid, p. 287.

10. Recall that the title of one of Shen-hsiu's works is "Treatise on Viewing the Mind" (Kuan-hsin lun).

11. A central Northern Ch'an practice as we shall see.

12. Wu-tung 無動, another important Northern Ch'an theme.

13. Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, p. 137

14. These four verses are translated into Japanese and explained by Shinohara Hisao, "Koteki-sensei kōsha 'Nan'yō osho Tonkyo gedatsu Zenmon jiki nyōshō Dango' kōki," Shūkyōgaku ronshū, III (December 1969), p. 106.

15. T 85 (2834)1273. Cf. Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, Vol. I, p. 450.

16. Ibid.

17. Tsung-mi, ibid., p. 91.

18. T 48 (2009)366c.

19. T 85 (2833)1271a.

20. T 85 (2833)1271a.

21. T 85 (2833)1271b.

22. Ibid., p. 1271c.

23. Ibid., p. 1272b.

24. Ibid., p. 1273a, amended in light of T 48 (2009)368c23-4.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 1273b, amended in light of T 48 (2009)369c.

27. Ts'an ch'an-men shih, T 85 (2839)1292c.

28. T 85 (2834)1273; Ui, ibid., p. 450.

29. This passage appears immediately following the statement that "Each of you must resolve to sit in cross-legged meditation," which was previously quoted in this dissertation.

30. Ibid., p. 1273. The practice of "guarding" or "awareness" of mind, as practiced by Shen-hsiu's teacher Hung-jen, is discussed by W. Pachow, "A Buddhist Discourse on Meditation from Tun-huang," University of Ceylon Review, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (April, 1963).

31. We will discuss the meaning of this at greater length in the next section when we consider whether Northern Ch'an practices could be characterized as 'quietistic'.

32. T 48 (2009)369c8-9.

33. T 85 (2834)1273.

34. Ibid. Note that the character chao 照 is used by Shen-hui in the previous description, translated "for external illumination."

35. We might note here that what we have been translating as 'undisturbed' is acalā in Sanskrit, and names the eighth stage of the Bodhisattva way, where the grossest of the obscurations are removed. It is discussed by Har Dayal in his Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature, London: Kegan Paul, 1932, p. 290. The description does not seem to correspond to wu-tung as discussed by the Northern Ch'an manuscripts. We should also note that these characters appear in Chinese philosophy long before the entry of Buddhism into China in Mencius, II A 2 is the phrase "...the mind not being perturbed (wu-tung)."

36. Garma C.C. Chang, Teachings of Tibetan Yoga, 1963, p. 8.

37. Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, p. 137.

38. Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, Vol. III, p. 471.

39. Ui, ibid., p. 454, T 85 (2834)1274c11.

40. We can see that the Northern Ch'an texts use "Hinayana" to refer to any Buddhist who practices an incorrect form of meditation and believes that to be the goal of Buddhism, but do not use the expression (and related ones like "Two Vehicles") to denote the form of Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka. These derogatory terms are used to denote Chinese Buddhists who err in their understanding or practice.

41. Ui, ibid.

42. T 85 (2834)1275a14; Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, Vol. I, p. 455.

43. Ui, ibid., p. 473.

44. Ibid., p. 474.

45. Hu Shih, ibid., p. 239; Suzuki, Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū, vol. III, p. 312; Yanagida, Kōsha 'Nan'yō ōsho tonkyō gedatsu Zenmon jiki ryōshō Dango' no taishō hyō, p. 13.

46. Ui, ibid., p. 504.

47. The term wu-chi generally means "morally indeterminate" in the sense that something cannot be classified as either good or evil. See Nakamura, Bukkyōgo daijiten, p. 1318b-c. The expression wu-chi k'ung is not used in any of the Prajñāpāramitā literature, but does appear in the Mahapārinirvāṇa sūtra, T 12 (375)849a6. The expression wu-chi appears in numerous Ch'an texts, many from this period. For example, in the Hsiu-hsin yao-lun, attributed to the Fifth Patriarch Hung-jen, the master is asked what is meant by the "indeterminate" or "blank" mind, and Hung-jen replies: "People who practice mental concentration inhibit the perfect mind within themselves by being dependent on sensory perception, coarse states of mind, and slowness of breathing. . . . Although they do so during all their activities, (such people) cannot achieve (mental) clarity and purity, nor illumine the mind which is the source. This is called blankness (wu-chi)." (Hsiu-hsin yao-lun, translation of five collated texts by John McRae, unpublished, p. 31). Cf. Pachow, "A Buddhist Discourse on Meditation from Tun-Huang," ibid., p. 57 where Pachow translates wu-chi as "neutral." McRae explains wu-chi as follows: "The term wu-chi . . . refers to a dull state of trance or mental paralysis, as it were. It is indicative of a basic error in the student's approach to religious training -- the attempt to force oneself into a realm of meditative purity apart from one's usual state of existence." (ibid.)

    The phrase wu-chi k'ung appears in the Platform Sutra, where Philip Yampolsky translates it as "fall into a neutral kind of emptiness," (Platform Sutra, p. 146). The same line is translated by Suzuki as "falling into a blank emptiness" in his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, p. 26.

    The expression also appears in the Wu-men kuan, the famous Ch'an collection of forty-eight k'ung-an, and Ch'an master Nan-ch'üan (748-835) comments:

    > Tao does not belong to knowing or to not-knowing. Knowing is illusion; not-knowing is blankness [wu-chi].

    The above translation was by the Japanese Zen master Shibayama Zenkei, Zen Comments on the Mumonkan, Harper

and Row, 1974, p. 140.

Dr. David Chappell, in a personal communication, has indicated to me that in the T'ien-t'ai school of Chinese Buddhism, if one moved from the 'conventional realm' into emptiness, and remained there, it was called a "blank emptiness" because the monk must also move from the passive understanding of emptiness back into the world and worldly affairs, demonstrating that he has an active understanding of the truth of emptiness.

48. Ui, *ibid.*, p. 472.

49. This position is advocated throughout the writings of Alan Watts. For example, see his last publication, *Tao: The Watercourse Way*, Pantheon Books, 1977.

50. Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, p. 82. Note that the passage translated by Dr. Yampolsky comes from the *Transmission of the Lamp*'s entry on Hui-neng, and does not come from the text of the *Platform Sutra* itself.

51. Kamata, *ibid.*, p. 59.

52. Hu Shih, *Shen-hui ho-shang i-chi*, pp. 133-134.

53. Yampolsky, *ibid.*, p. 181.

54. See W. Pachow, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-62.

55. Yampolsky, *ibid.*, pp. 135-36.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

57. Kamata, *ibid.*, p. 132.

58. D. T. Suzuki, *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū*, vol. III, p. 35.

59. Kamata, *ibid.*, p. 116; emphasis mine.

60. T 14 (475)539c19-25. This passage was quoted very often by Ho-tse Shen-hui, and he generally used it to attack the practice of seated meditation, especially in the Northern line of Shen-hsiu.

CHAPTER III

"Gradual Enlightenment"

> The deluded recommend the gradual method, the enlightened practice sudden cultivation.
>
> Hui-neng[1]

Introduction

The controversy concerning the so-called "gradual" versus "sudden" enlightenment is probably the most famous aspect of the division of Ch'an into the two lines of North and South. Certainly, this was taken to be one of the distinguishing marks separating the two lines. The Sung kao-seng ch'uan ("Sung Dynasty Records of Eminent Monks") states:

> When the people [of the capital] saw Shen-hui illuminating the spirit of the teachings of the sixth patriarch, they rejected the method of gradual cultivation. The division of the two schools into 'Southern' and 'Northern' began during this time.[2]

The Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu ("Transmission of the Lamp") says essentially the same thing:

> . . . the followers of the gradual doctrine flourished in the areas of Honan and Shansi, and therefore the master Shen-hui returned to the capital in the fourth year of the T'ien-pao era [745] and set about settling [the correctness of] the two teachings,

and then a footnote is added to the text by the editor to explain the reference to the "two teachings":

> [The two teachings are] the Southern Hui-neng Sudden School and the Northern Shen-hsiu Gradual doctrine.[3]

A similar description is provided by Tsung-mi in his text Ch'an-men shih-tzu ch'eng-hsi t'u ("Lineage Charts of the Ch'an Masters"):

> "Southern school" [refers to] the great master of Ts'ao-ch'i [Hui-neng] who inherited the teaching of Bodhidharma and the school of the mutual transmission of the robe and the dharma. Later, because in the north Shen-hsiu greatly propagated the gradual teaching, in order to distinguish it from this, [Hui-neng's school] was called the Southern School.[4]

From the above records and others, it is clear that Chinese scholars from this early period onwards believed that the single line of Ch'an Buddhism divided into two different schools, and the principal reason for this split was the difference between a gradual teaching and a sudden teaching. However, there are several possible meanings associated with the terms 'gradual' and 'sudden,' and before we can proceed to analyze the implications of this difference, we must become clear about what is being imputed to Northern Ch'an.

We can distinguish three different possibilities which could be associated with the term 'gradual' (chien 漸).

These three are (1) gradual cultivation (chien-hsiu 漸修), (2) gradual teaching (chien-chiao 漸教), and (3) gradual enlightenment (chien-wu 漸悟). As is well known, from about the fifth century the Chinese developed a system for dividing up and categorizing the Buddhist doctrines, called p'an-chiao 判教. Among the various classifications was the distinction between a 'sudden teaching' and a 'gradual teaching,' although the interpretation of these phrases varied. Most often the gradual teaching was associated with Hinayana Buddhism, and the sudden teaching associated with texts such as the Avataṁsaka or Vimalakīrti sutras. This division apparently began about the time of Kumārajīva (344-413), and was carried to its highest development by Chih-i (538-577) of the T'ien-t'ai school, and Fa-tsang (643-712) of the Hua-yen tradition.[5]

Let us briefly consider possible interpretations of these three ways in which Northern Ch'an might have been called 'gradualistic.'

(1) Gradual teaching (chien-chiao 漸教). The gradual teaching seems to have at least two ways in which it can be interpreted, either (A) historically or (B) doctrinally. In Chih-i's p'an-chiao system, it had a historical sense. According to Chih-i, immediately following his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha revealed the content of his awakening all at once (tun 頓),[6] immediately and directly, and this supposedly became the

content of the *Avataṃsaka sutra*. However, as no one was capable of comprehending this profound doctrine, the Buddha switched to a 'gradual teaching,' where he began with simple doctrines and ideas and only gradually revealed the deeper and more profound doctrines.[7] In other words, for Chih-i, 'gradual teaching' referred to the supposedly historical unfolding of the Buddha's doctrines, progressing from the simple through levels up to the most profound.

However, in Fa-tsang's *p'an-chiao* system, 'gradual teaching' seems to have been given a more doctrinal interpretation. The 'sudden teaching,' for Fa-tsang, was one which did not utilize words and was associated with the 'thundering silence' of the *Vimalakīrti sutra*.[8] Consequently, for Fa-tsang, the gradual teaching is one which teaches with words, where the monk progresses through stages and the various levels of the Bodhisattva one after another, where "cause and effect are in succession, and one proceeds from the subtle to the manifest . . . ."[9] Apparently Fa-tsang included both early Buddhism and the later Mahayana systems under the category of 'gradual.'[10]

(2) Gradual cultivation (*chien-hsiu* 漸修). This too has a possible double signification. It could refer strictly to meditation practices, implying that one gradually ascends step-by-step through levels of meditation (e.g.,

the four _jhāna_), and through this progresses upwardly until one is finally prepared for full enlightenment -- in other words, there is a sequential stage of preparatory development prior to enlightenment. On the other hand, gradual cultivation is also used to refer to levels of doctrinal understanding as well, such as when the monk begins by understanding the emptiness of the self, advances to comprehend the emptiness of all dharmas, etc. Probably we should see the meditative and doctrinal advance as going together and not as being separate parts of the path.

(3) Gradual enlightenment (_chien-wu_ 漸悟). Tsung-mi explains gradual enlightenment in terms of a scheme of "sudden practice followed by gradual enlightenment" by comparing it to the "sudden practice" of the archer who instantaneously releases his arrow, which then step-by-step gradually approaches and enters the target.[11] Although this analogy is not completely clear, Tsung-mi seems to be suggesting that one can be 20% enlightened at one time, and then 40%, 80%, and finally 100% enlightened.

Our next step will be to ascertain which of these three doctrines Northern Ch'an was accused of maintaining by the Southern line.

Southern Ch'an criticisms of Northern Ch'an

Although we find references to the gradual teaching of Northern Ch'an in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, the clearest statement of these criticisms is found in the writings of Ho-tsê Shen-hui. For example, in a dialogue which appears in his "Treatise Establishing the True and False according to the Southern School of Bodhidharma," Ho-tsê Shen-hui says that Shen-hsiu's Northern Ch'an doctrines should not be permitted because they go against the total spirit of the school established by Bodhidharma:

> It is because no one considers 'sudden' and 'gradual' to be the same that this is not to be permitted. All six generations of great teachers of my line spoke of chopping through like a knife and directly entering, directly realizing and seeing one's own true nature, and did not speak of 'gradualness,' or step-by-step [progression].[12]

And, in his Platform Sermon, Shen-hui relates the gradual progression advocated by Northern Ch'an to their practice of 'inspecting' (k'an 看). The text states:

> Friends, take what you have learned in the past and discard it; you must not practice inspecting (k'an). Those of you who have already spent five, ten, or twenty years studying meditation (ch'an 禪), hearing this, now you must feel very startled.[13]

And, in another passage from the same text, Shen-hui makes a slightly different criticism against Northern Ch'an:

> Some of those who teach meditation (ch'an) do not permit sudden enlightenment, and require that [their students] follow [the method of] upāya to become initially enlightened. This is a teaching for greatly inferior types.[14]

This passage is especially significant because Ho-tsê Shen-hui contrasts sudden enlightenment with the method of upāya, and we have already seen how closely the Northern line associates itself with the five upāya. In contrasting upāya with sudden enlightenment, Shen-hui is clearly suggesting that he views the method of upāya as a gradual path.

The various criticisms of Northern Ch'an on this topic are not too difficult to separate out and categorize. I discern the following four criticisms either implicit or explicit in the Southern Ch'an writings. In the first place, it is suggested that Northern Ch'an advocates a gradual approach to enlightenment, whereas on the other hand, the Southern teaching emphasizes the possibility of becoming enlightened suddenly. A second point is the claim that Northern Ch'an taught only a gradual doctrine, and did not permit the teaching of sudden enlightenment. The third criticism says that there are two approaches to enlightenment, sudden and gradual, however the gradual approach is only for (a) deluded people, or for (b) people of inferior mental capacity. Both of these are found in the Platform Sutra where Hui-neng says:

> Good friends, in the Dharma there is no sudden or gradual, but among people some are keen and others dull. The deluded recommend the gradual method, the enlightened practice the sudden teaching. . . . Once enlightened, there is from the outset no distinction between these two . . . .[15]

In addition, Shen-hui responds to a question by saying:

> The awakening of the mind of bodhi is either sudden or gradual; in illusions or enlightenment there is slowness or rapidity. Illusion accumulates for kalpa

> but enlightenment takes place instantaneously. This idea is difficult to comprehend.[16]

And, in another dialogue with the same person, Shen-hui says:

> It is because some people are of superior ability and others inferior that the teachings (chiao) are sudden or gradual.[17]

A fourth criticism is that no one in the Ch'an lineage, from the time of Bodhidharma on down, ever advocated anything like a gradual approach through levels or stages. Instead, all spoke of "directly entering, directly realizing, and seeing one's own true nature . . . ."[18] This criticism is of a strictly historical nature rather than a philosophical difficulty (although such a criticism carried a great deal of weight in the Chinese tradition), and so it will not be pursued further in this dissertation.

If the criticisms are evaluated in terms of the previous analysis of 'gradual,' we see Northern Ch'an accused of maintaining both (a) gradual cultivation (chien-hsiu 漸修), and (b) a teaching which goes through stages, step-by-step, moving upwards to enlightenment (position 2B distinguished on pages 49-51). Nowhere is the Northern line accused of practicing a doctrine of gradual enlightenment (chien-wu 漸悟).

This is further supported by Tsung-mi's analysis of various doctrines in his Ch'an-yüan chu-ch'üan-chi tu-shü ("Preface to 'Fountainheads of Ch'an'"). In this work, Tsung-mi distinguishes between gradual cultivation, gradual

enlightenment, sudden cultivation, and sudden enlightenment. In his analysis, Tsung-mi has taken the four different Chinese characters involved (*chien* 漸, *tun* 頓, *hsiu* 修, and *wu* 悟), and arranged them in six patterns:

(1) Gradual cultivation, then sudden enlightenment.

(2) Sudden cultivation, then gradual enlightenment.

(3) Gradual cultivation, then gradual enlightenment.

(4) Sudden enlightenment, then gradual cultivation.

(5) Sudden enlightenment, then sudden cultivation.

(6) Neither sudden nor gradual (*wu tun chien* 無頓漸).[19]

The three other possibilities are not mentioned by Tsung-mi, either because he did not consider them feasible, or because he did not think that there was any school which held such doctrines.[20] Although Tsung-mi's entire system of classification raises numerous interesting questions, we shall not pursue this except as it relates to the dispute between the two Ch'an lines. Although in this passage Tsung-mi does not identify any of these six with either the Northern or Southern lines, in another text ("Charts of the Lineages of the Ch'an Schools") Tsung-mi claimed that the Northern line only practiced gradual cultivation and denied sudden enlightenment.[21] This was also Ho-tsê Shen-hui's claim in his *Platform Sermon*:

> Some of those who teach meditation (*ch'an* 禪) do not permit sudden enlightenment, and require that [their students] follow the method of *upāya* to become initially enlightened.[22]

In the same passage, Tsung-mi identifies the pattern of "sudden enlightenment and then gradual cultivation" with the Southern school of Hui-neng and Ho-tsê Shen-hui.

As with the previous chapter, before we can begin to analyze the philosophical point of contention between the two lines, we must first establish the actual attitude of the Northern line on this topic. If they did not hold the positions attributed to them by Southern Ch'an, there is no reason to look into the philosophical content of what would then be empty allegations.

Analysis of the Northern Ch'an Position

The terminology of Northern Ch'an concerning awakening is often suggestive of a progressive approach, and it does seem as though it can be interpreted in this way:

> To be free from mind (li-hsin 離心) is 'Self Awakening,' which is being free from the causal [arising of the] five senses. To be free from forms (rūpa) is 'Awakening Others,' with no causal [arising of the] five dusts of impurity. Mind and form both free is 'Perfect Awakening,' which is the Tathāgata's universal dharmakāya.[23]

This could be interpreted as a progressive movement from 'Self Awakening' to 'Perfect Awakening.'

In Shen-hsiu's Kuan-hsin lun, the discussion of the six pāramitā seems to suggest that through control of the mind, one can progress towards the 'other shore':

> If you want to cultivate the six 'crossing-over' (tu 度), then you must purify the six senses. Having already brought to terms (chiang 降) the six thieves, one can cast out the Eye-Thief and be free from all realms of form, and the mind will be without stinginess. This is called [the first pāramitā], charity. If you can restrain the Ear-Thief, not allowing it to chase after sounds (lit. "sound-gunas"), this is called keeping the precepts. If you can keep the Nose-Thief from freely wandering everywhere there are fragrances and smells, this is called [the third pāramitā, namely] patience. If you can restrain the Tongue-Thief, not craving various flavors, not praising, not chanting, not explaining or expounding, this is called 'zeal and progress.' If you can bring to terms the Body-thief and its desires, with your mind profound and undisturbed (wu-tung), this is called [the pāramitā of] dhyāna. If you can control the Mind-Thief (i, 意), not following in accord with ignorance [but] continually cultivating the joy of awakening and wisdom, and the numerous virtues, this is called prajña. . . . These six pāramitā are like the boat which can transport sentient beings over to the other shore. This is the reason that they are also called the 'Six Crossing-Overs.'[24]

The controlling of the six senses so that the mind does not follow after the corresponding sense objects is the way to cross over to the other shore. Although it is not clear whether one is to control one sense at a time, or work upon controlling all six simultaneously, it would seem that the latter is most likely.[25] Nevertheless, the process is not a simple one, and it seems very unlikely that one could achieve perfect and complete control over all six of these instantaneously -- time and practice are certainly involved. If the process takes place over time, with one's control gradually or sequentially improving, then the method outlined would seem to be a type of gradual cultivation.

The following passage has a mildly gradualistic tinge:

> A tall bright lamp is [like] the truly awakened mind. It is because prajñā illuminatingly understands (ming-liao 明了) that it is compared to a lamp. This is the reason that all who seek liberation always consider the body as the base of the lamp, the mind as the lamp's oil-storage compartment, and faith as the lamp-wick. Increasing one's practice of the precepts is like adding more oil. The penetrating illumination (brightness) of prajñā is like the lamp light. Constantly aflame, it is like the lamp of suchness and true awakening.[26]

The lamp image is used as an analogy for both the instantaneous approach to awakening and for a more gradual approach. The element here which is suggestive of a more gradualistic interpretation is the notion of the lamp's oil-storage compartment, and comparing the addition of more oil to the lamp with increasing one's proficiency in the practice of the precepts (śīla).

For another piece of evidence, we can see what appears to be two stages in the realization of prajñā according to the writings of the Northern line. Chinese Buddhists traditionally utilized the two-character compound chih-hui 智慧 to supply the meaning and translation of the Sanskrit "prajñā." But, in the Northern texts, the two-character compound is divided into two separate components, the 'gateway of chih' and the 'gateway of hui,' respectively. For example, in the Ts'an Ch'an-men shih, we find:

> The five senses together are the gateway of hui;[27]
> The mind-sense undisturbed is the gateway of chih.

And, a little further along in the same paragraph:

> Mind undisturbed (unmoving) is chih (智) and its activity is knowing (chih 知).
> Form undisturbed is hui, and its activity is seeing.
> Both of these undisturbed is opening the 'Knowing-and-Seeing' of the Buddha, and is the achievement of Great Nirvana.[28]

Chih (智) is invariably associated with mental activity, and hui associated with the activity of the senses. Other discussions make it clear that the chih aspect of prajñā is associated with undisturbed mental awareness (being free from thinking), and the hui aspect associated with perceptual activity. In order to completely realize prajñā (chih-hui), the text states that one can utilize the assistance of an "internal (nei 內) spiritual guide (kalyāṇamitra, lit. 'good friend')." In response to the question, "What is an internal spiritual guide?" the text states:

> It is chih and it is hui.
> Knowing (chih 知) is chih (智), and consciousness is hui.
> The transformation of mind (i, 意 , manas) to become chih is opening up the gateway of chih.[29]

A question which arises at this point is whether this conceptual separation of prajñā into mental and sensory aspects implies that prajñā is achievable in two steps which correspond to these two aspects. Clearly, the conceptual separation of prajñā into chih and hui does not imply that these were ever intended to be achieved separably. However, the Northern texts themselves make it clear that a Buddhist can in fact achieve only one aspect (hui), so the two are in fact separable, and not just conceptually separable. In the

longest of the five upāya texts, we find the following:

> The follower of the Two Vehicles does succeed in opening and achieving the gateway of hui; . . . [However] being attached to non-disturbance, he destroys the six consciousnesses and realizes the Nirvana of emptiness and extinction.[30]

The follower of the Two Vehicles achieves the hui-aspect, but still does not achieve prajñā. So, hui is achievable apart from chih, but it is not described as some sort of "inferior prajñā"; in fact hui is not yet prajñā at all. Still, hui is achieved independently of chih. If the Hinayanist were able to open the gateway of chih-hui together (and not separately), he would no longer be a follower of the Two Vehicles but instead would have achieved the goal of ~~the~~ Mahayana Bodhisattva path, which the text refers to as "Great Nirvana."[31] It is not clear that the Mahayana follower is supposed to go first to hui, and then chih. If this were the case, then hui would be a preparatory stage leading to full prajñā. The Northern line's texts are silent on this aspect. Does the Mahayanist always achieve chih and hui simultaneously, or can he achieve hui and then chih (or in the reverse order)? If it is the latter case, then we have preparatory stages leading to full prajñā.[32]

To summarize: achieving the mind undisturbed is opening the gateway of chih; achieving the realization of forms being undisturbed through the practice of concentration (ting 定), is opening the gateway of hui. The simultaneous functioning of both is prajñā (chih-hui), and the functioning of prajñā

is Bodhi. Another passage states that mind and form both undisturbed is Awakening (chüeh 覺), and "both mind and form unmoving" is the Great Nirvana of the Mahayana.[33]

That this was understood as a gradual, step-by-step approach[34] by Southern Ch'an can be seen in the way the Platform Sutra interpreted it. Shen-hsiu's famous poem is:

> The body is the Bodhi tree
> The mind is like a clear mirror.
> At all times we must strive to polish it,
> And must not let the dust collect.
> (Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, p. 130).

The image of polishing as a continual process has been seen previously in the Northern line's advocacy of "guarding the mind." There are numerous kleśa which need to be removed. There are both affective impediments to enlightenment (the hui aspect), and intellectual impediments (the chih aspect), and the preparatory stages leading to prajñā must include the removal of these obstacles, and "not letting the dust collect." This recognition of preparatory stages would seem to be implicit in Mahayana Buddhism in general, and not just in the Northern line. The notion of ten successive bhūmi which the Bodhisattva ascends in his quest for supreme enlightenment would seem fully consonant with the Northern Ch'an emphasis upon the necessity for preparatory stages.

Although none of the preceding topics demonstrates conclusively that Northern Ch'an advocated a path of gradual

removal of impediments, we have tried to show that such an interpretation is not incompatible with the writings of Northern Ch'an. The Southern Ch'an description of Northern Ch'an made it clear that this is how the Southern school interpreted the teachings of the North. However, it should be clear that if the Northern line did advocate a gradual path leading to enlightenment, it is by no means the case that such a position is poor Buddhism. In fact, such a position was very strongly advocated by some Buddhists, in direct opposition to the 'sudden' teachings of Ch'an.[35]

Although both Ho-tsê Shen-hui and Tsung-mi claimed that the Northern line utilized only a gradual approach and did not recognize sudden enlightenment, this can be demonstrated to be untrue. In Shen-hsiu's Kuan-hsin lun, it states:

> Simply be able to control the mind for inner illumination and realize contemplation for outer clarity . . . . There are innumerable dharma-gateways; investigate and all will be achieved and understood. You will transcend the ordinary and achieve sagehood. It will be right before your eyes and not far off in the distance. Enlightenment takes place in a moment (eka-kṣaṇa).[36]

This text (taken from Taishō volume 85) emphasizes the sudden nature of enlightenment; however, the corresponding passage from the text in Taishō 48 places the position in the perspective of gradual attainment:

> . . . There are innumerable dharma-gateways and one after another you will attain and understand them. You will transcend the ordinary and awaken sagehood. Enlightenment takes place in a moment.[37]

In other words, the actual teaching of the Northern line of

Ch'an Buddhism seems best described by the phrase "gradual cultivation and then sudden enlightenment," because the idea that enlightenment is sudden clearly does appear in the Northern Ch'an text -- and sudden enlightenment is the end of the progression.

There is still a profound difference between this approach and that of the Southern school. Ho-tsê Shen-hui's position on this is stated in the following paragraph:

> All six generations of great teachers of my line spoke of chopping through like a knife and directly entering, directly realizing and seeing one's own nature, and did not speak of [the path being] gradual or in steps. Students of the Way, you must suddenly see your Buddha-nature, and then gradually cultivate causal conditions; without leaving this life yet you will achieve liberation. It is like a mother giving birth to her child all at once [who is born with all senses, mind, limbs, etc. fully formed and intact], and then gives the child her breast and gradually nourishes and raises him; the child's wisdom and understanding naturally is nourished and increased. To be suddenly enlightened to your Buddha-nature is just like this. Then *prajñā* is nourished and increased.[38]

This is almost the identical illustration used by Tsung-mi to characterize the pattern of "sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation." Tsung-mi says that when a child is born, his four limbs and six senses suddenly appear fully formed at birth, but for the full use of them it requires many more years of development.[39]

On the basis of the above statements, there is a clear disagreement between the Northern and Southern lines, but not exactly the one suggested in the historical records. The Northern line did allow for and admit sudden enlightenment

(contrary to Ho-tsê Shen-hui's claims), but apparently saw this as coming at the end of a period of gradual cultivation, a path of gradual or step-by-step elimination of the defilements, where the monk increases in understanding and progressively masters the dharma-gateways one after another. This approach seems certainly very reasonable. This approach, the method of progressive removal of obstacles and progressive understanding, could aptly be characterized as the "polishing of the mirror" as is done in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. When one has finally brought the six senses and mind under control, when one has finally removed the impurities caused by the defiled activity of mind which grasps after what it perceives, one has revealed the mind-itself which is free from thinking, which seems to be the same pure mind which the Northern masters advise us to 'inspect' (k'an 看), maintain awareness of (shou 守), or contemplate (kuan 觀). On the other hand, the Southern school of Ho-tsê Shen-hui advocated the sudden experience of seeing one's true nature, followed by a gradual and progressive refining of one's experience. The interesting philosophical implications of this difference, raises the question of the inherent abilities of men, and will be discussed next.

The third Southern Ch'an criticism claimed that a gradual approach to enlightenment is only for those of inferior ability. This is a most interesting objection, for it helps to lay clear the differing philosophical foundations for the disagreement

between the two lines of Ch'an on sudden versus gradual. It seems quite likely that the Northern Ch'an masters might have agreed that the gradual method is for people of inadequate capacity. A constant refrain found in the *Kuan-hsin lun* of Shen-hsiu and the various "five *upāya*" texts, is that this is the period of the decay of the Buddhist dharma (*mo-fa* 末法), and according to the traditional Chinese understanding, this means that, during this period, people's capacities, or abilities, are so very low that it is almost impossible for anyone at all to genuinely understand the profound truths of Buddhism.[40] In Shen-hsiu's *Kuan-hsin lun*, we find numerous references to people of this time being of inferior ability. For example:

> In the sutras, the Buddha explained that there are innumerable *upāya* because all sentient beings have inferior ability, are narrow-minded and bad. They cannot understand the truth which is profound and deep. For this reason they falsely consider the conditioned to be like the unconditioned reality. Again, they do not cultivate inner practices (*nei-hsing* 內行), but merely seek outwardly.[41]

And again:

> If you are one who violates [the pure precepts], it is just like committing a great crime. How much more people of today increasingly violate the pure precepts! Moreover, they destroy the myriad things seeking their good fortune; desiring personal advantage they return destruction. How can we have this?[42]

This theme is repeated again and again throughout the texts. Some more examples:

> Foolish ignorant people do not understand the explanation of the *upāya* of the Tathāgata. They simply practice vain delusions, and are attached to the conditioned realm. . . . How could this not be a great error?[43]

And again:

> I venture the opinion that people of the present are of the type of sentient being with inferior ability. They do not inwardly cultivate themselves, but merely are attached to an outward seeking.[44]

And:

> People of today are foolish and grumbling, of inferior ability, and do not fathom this matter.[45]

And:

> In my view, people of the present day are of shallow understanding, they merely recognize the characteristics of things and take that to be accomplishment. . . . They invert the mind in exhaustive activity, but [merely] injure themselves and delude others.[46]

In another Northern Ch'an text, which is a history of the Ch'an patriarchs from the point of view of one of the lines of Northern Ch'an, entitled Leng-chia shih-tzu chi [T 85 (2837) 1283-90], the distinction between those of inferior ability and those of superior ability is made repeatedly. For example, in the section dealing with the life of Tao-hsin, the text states:

> The Buddha, for the sake of those sentient beings of inferior ability, caused them to be oriented towards the Western regions [Pure Land], and he did not preach [this doctrine] for people of superior ability. . . . Not recognizing the basic conditions of superior and inferior is just like having differences and yet approving of everyone. This is extremely bitter, bitter, and is a great calamity. . . . These people are greatly despoiling the Buddha's teachings, deceive themselves, and deceive others.[47]

That this was the view of Shen-hsiu, and those who lived and taught during the period when the Southern school began its attacks upon the Northern line, cannot be doubted.[48] And

I believe that this basic attitude of Northern Ch'an helps to explain the emphasis upon upāya in the Northern Ch'an writings, and ultimately helps to explain the philosophical differences between the two lines on this point.

If the Northern line masters felt that many (most?) of the students during this period were really of inferior ability and consequently could not be expected to understand any teaching which demanded that the student leap over intermediate levels and steps (sudden teaching), they might well emphasize upāya instead. Upāya becomes the expedient means utilized to bring people of less-than-superior faculties to enlightenment. From this interpretation, the Northern line can be seen as showing a compassionate awareness of the difficulties of the student in the days of the decline of the dharma (mo-fa), and utilizing numerous upāya, or skillful means, to try to make things clear to those monks. Whether the distinctions, levels, and aspects of Northern Ch'an were seen as representing the highest truth of Buddhism (paramārtha satya) is unclear so far; generally upāya (as "expedient means") is associated with the worldly, mundane, or expedient truth (saṁvṛti satya). However, some Chinese Buddhists have identified upāya with the highest truth.[49] This is a crucial topic, and we will return to it in the next chapter; however we should call attention to the fact that an emphasis upon upāya is typical of Mahayana Buddhism in general, and is especially emphasized in the sutras upon which the Northern line generally relied (especially the

Saddharmapuṇḍarīka and the Vimalakīrti sutras).

The criticisms of the Southern line concerning this issue can be shown to be founded upon a rather different basis than is generally believed. One central theme of the Nirvāṇa sutra is that there is an inherent Buddha-nature in all sentient beings, and this key idea played an important role in the thinking of Hui-neng of the South, and also influenced the Northern line as well, as has been pointed out by D.T. Suzuki,[50] but there seems to have been a rather different interpretation placed upon this seminal idea. I believe that we can make sense of the argument over sudden and gradual teachings if we interpret the Southern line of Ho-tsê Shen-hui as feeling that the existence of the innate Buddha-nature in all sentient beings obviates the distinction between those of superior ability and those of inferior ability. In other words, the Northern line can be understood as emphasizing the differing abilities of the people who study Buddhism, and in doing so they recognize the varying capacities of sentient beings and consequently emphasize various expedient means (upāya) to bring these people of differing abilities to enlightenment. Opposed to this, the Southern line can be understood as emphasizing the theoretic teaching that Buddha-nature is found in all sentient beings, and all one has to do is recognize or 'see' it (chien-hsing 見性). In this way, Shen-hui can be understood as responding on the basis of his feeling that people become of inferior capacity because of their clouded

vision. For the Southern school, if clouded vision was the cause of the monk's difficulty, then by seeing his own true nature (which is seen all at once), the disciple can be brought to a sudden enlightenment, but following that, he must gradually cultivate himself in order to fully understand the profundity of the insight. On the other hand, the Northern line placed great emphasis upon the distinction between superior and inferior abilities, and saw this distinction as rooted in the very nature of people -- consequently people being of inferior ability caused their difficulties, and lacking the natural ability to overcome this all at once, they had to pursue the path through grades, levels, and stages -- e.g. upāya. In addition, the position of the Northern school can certainly be supported by the Mahayana sutras, such as the place where Vimalakīrti tells Maudgalyāyana, "You should be clear about the sharp or dull roots of your audience and have a good knowledge of this to avoid all sorts of hindrance."[51] On the other hand, Shen-hui says that "seeing [your self-nature] is a path which all ordinary people can hear and understand,"[52] and this path of seeing is intimately connected with the instantaneous nature of enlightenment:

> Fundamentally, your self-nature is pure and clear, and its essence is ungraspable. This kind of seeing is seeing your original nature. One who sees his original nature abides in the realm of the Tathāgata. This kind of seeing is to be free from all characteristics, and is to be a Buddha. Seeing like this is the instantaneous extinction of erroneous thoughts numerous as the grains of sand of the river Ganges. . . . Seeing

> like this is the ungraspable, it is true liberation, and is identical with the Knowing-and-Seeing of the Tathāgata, which is boundless, great, profound and deep, without differentiation.[53]

A related philosophical distinction can be drawn on this issue of sudden versus gradual cultivation. Although it is not stated clearly in the texts, the Northern Ch'an writings do imply that there are a large number of obstructions which impede one's path to enlightenment; e.g. there are obstructions associated with each of the six senses, there are the obstructions of the Three Poisons of craving (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha) which interfere, etc. These are not dealt with at one stroke, but instead are handled through a process of progressive exercises. In his Yüan-chüeh ching ta-shu ch'ao, Tsung-mi characterized the teachings of Shen-hsiu and the Northern line as follows:

> Sentient beings fundamentally possess the nature of Awakening, just as a mirror possesses the nature of brightness (illumination). The defilements (kleśa) cover it just like a mirror which is covered by dust and impurity. Get rid of erroneous thinking . . . in the same way that polishing the dust off a mirror results in it being illuminating and bright.[54]

Ho-tsê Shen-hui and the Southern line of Ch'an may well have conceived of the defilements in a somewhat different manner. Ho-tsê Shen-hui apparently saw all defilements as fundamentally of one sort, or from one single root source. This is clearly implied in Shen-hui's description of sudden enlightenment:

> A single bundle of thread is made up of innumerable separate strands, but if you join them together into a rope, and put it on a plank, you can easily cut through all these threads with one stroke of a sharp knife. Many though the threads be, they cannot resist that one blade. With those who are converted to the way of the Bodhisattvas, it is just the same. If they meet with a true Good Friend who by skillful means brings them to immediate perception of the Absolute, with diamond Wisdom they cut through the passions that belong to all the stages of Bodhisattvahood. . . . When this happens to them, all the myriads entanglements of Causation are cut away, and erroneous thoughts many as the sands of the Ganges in one moment suddenly cease.[55]

Although there are many different kleśa, if they are all of the same root, then it stands to reason that they can all be eliminated strand by strand.[56] There is a very suggestive passage in the Platform Sutra where Hui-neng says " . . . in one instant false thoughts will be destroyed. . . . this then is no-thought."[57] The Southern school's emphasis upon no-thought (wu-nien) provides additional support for this interpretation, especially if one notices the similarity between the descriptions of wu-nien and the idea of nirvikalpa in Indian Mahayana Buddhism.[58] For the Southern line, the expression "no-thought" describes the mind when it is operating in a non-dichotomous mode, and when it perceives things as they truly are, since it is free from deluded thinking. Ho-tsê Shen-hui says, "Simply be free from calculative thinking and let your [deluded] mind not arise. This is truly no-thought."[59]

I would like to suggest that one possible way to make sense out of the philosophical position of Southern Ch'an

concerning sudden enlightenment is to see it as considering all *kleśa* as types of *vikalpa*, "imaginative thought constructions," or "discriminations (which do not correspond to actuality)." Then the heavy emphasis upon *wu-nien* can be understood to be like the advocation of a state of *nirvikalpa*.[60] If the innumerable *kleśa*, which the Northern line envisions to be dust clouding the brightness of the mirror, are thought of only as strands of the single root of *vikalpa*, then sudden enlightenment will follow naturally from the view that all one has to do is see one's original nature (which Shen-hui equates with "seeing no-thought"). Although I am unable to find convincing evidence which would prove that this is in fact precisely what Hui-neng and Ho-tsê Shen-hui had in mind, I am suggesting that this analysis is compatible with the ideas of the Southern line, and would shed light upon the controversy concerning sudden and gradual. It provides a framework which allows us to recognize that both views have the same base (i.e. the Buddha-nature inherent in all living beings, and the importance of the mind), and yet differ concerning the nature of the path: gradual cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment (in the North); sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (in the South).

Conclusions

Southern Ch'an described the Northern school's approach

as being a gradual method of teaching and cultivation. It has been argued here that the practices of Northern Ch'an can be interpreted as a sequential and gradual progression by means of stages and levels--indeed, isn't the entire Bodhisattva path of the ten bhūmi precisely this?[61] We should recall that these gradually achieved levels and stages could be attained by the student in a relatively short period of time. Even if the teaching is called a gradual teaching, enlightenment can still be attained in this very life. We have also suggested that this gradualistic approach cannot be understood as some kind of serious error which makes Northern Ch'an non-Buddhist.

It has been demonstrated that Northern Ch'an did not teach a doctrine of gradual enlightenment (chien-wu 漸 悟), as has been claimed so often, nor did it deny the possibility of sudden enlightenment. This claim has been shown to be incorrect. However, although Northern Ch'an did recognize that enlightenment can happen in a moment,[62] the expression "sudden enlightenment" (tun-wu) was not encountered in any of the Northern Ch'an texts examined. This is one very conspicuous difference between the two lines. "Sudden enlightenment" appears in the complete titles of the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, the Platform Sermon of Ho-tsê Shen-hui, the Tun-wu yao-men ("Essentials of Sudden Enlightenment") of Hui-hai, in Huang-po's writings, and throughout the Southern Ch'an literature of the period. On the other hand, almost no em-

phasis is placed upon "instantaneousness" in the Northern Ch'an writings--instead the emphasis is placed upon the methods for achieving the goal and not upon the final result.

Southern Ch'an texts of the period claimed that a gradual approach was only for people of inferior abilities. It has been argued here that the Northern line might have agreed with this, but, instead of interpreting this as a reason for rejecting a gradual approach, Northern Ch'an texts suggest that the method of upāya (identified with a gradual path by Ho-tsê Shen-hui) can be interpreted as skillful means designed to bring about awakening in the minds of those who live in this period of the decay of the true dharma (mo-fa).

It was also suggested that differing understandings of the nature of the obstacles to Awakening could also account for the differences between the two lines. The Southern school understood the kleśa as having one root,[63] made up of innumerable strands which could be severed instantaneously by simply seeing one's original nature (or "seeing no-thought"). Nowhere in the examined writings of the Northern line are there any passages which would suggest that there is a single unified nature to the kleśa, although both schools would be in complete agreement with the statement that the source of all defilements is the mind. Although offered only as a tentative suggestion, the distinction is perfectly consistent with the respective teachings of the two lines, and has the advantage of supplying a convenient and simple model which can

help to explain the difference of opinion concerning sudden enlightenment.

The fourth criticism of Northern Ch'an was that none of the previous Ch'an patriarchs had ever taught a gradual method. As is obvious, even if it were true, it would not entail the conclusion that the Northern line was in error in teaching such a doctrine.

To summarize: analysis has yielded the following three tentative conclusions concerning the disagreement over the issue of sudden and gradual teachings.

1. Northern Ch'an probably did advocate and practice a gradual method leading to awakening.
2. Northern Ch'an masters apparently did conceive of the path as one of gradual cultivation leading to sudden awakening, in contrast to the Southern masters who understood the path as one of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation of the initial insight.[64]
3. The Northern Ch'an texts emphasize the capacities of people, and gave credence to the doctrine of the last period of the teaching, and can be understood as focusing their methods in such a way that everyone in this period could be enlightened. In contrast, Southern Ch'an apparently placed more emphasis upon the doctrine of innate Buddha-nature, which seemed to render all people equal in the

ability to become enlightened. If a person can simply "see his or her Buddha-nature," the result is a sudden enlightenment experience, which is then followed by a long period of refinement.

FOOTNOTES

1. Suzuki, Tonkō shutsudo Rokuso dankyō, Tokyo, 1934, p. 13. The same passage is found in a slightly different translation in Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, p. 137.

2. From Ho-tsê Shen-hui's biographical entry, T 50 (2061) 756c. A similar description is found in Shen-hsiu's entry on page 756a26-7.

3. T 51 (2076)245a.

4. Kamata, Zengen shosenshū tojo, p. 277.

5. For p'an-chiao prior to Chih-i's system, see Leon Hurvitz, "Chih-i," Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques, Brussels, 1962, pp. 214-30.

6. The Chinese character tun has been variously translated as "sudden," "all at once," and "abrupt."

7. Cf. "But once he decided to preach, he adopted the gradual method of instruction, knowing the differences in the temperaments and capabilities of people." David Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy, p. 20.

8. It might be noted that nowhere in his writings does Fa-tsang indicate that he might have been aware of a Ch'an school of sudden enlightenment.

9. T 45 (1866)481b14. In the same text, Fa-tsang characterizes the sudden teaching by saying that it "means that the teaching through words is suddenly stopped, the nature of the highest truth is revealed, understanding and practice are suddenly perfected, and not a single thought arises. This is Buddhahood." (p. 481b16-20).

10. Miyuki Mokusen, "Chiao-p'an," in Essays on the History of Buddhist Thought Presented to Professor Yuki Reimon, Tokyo, 1964, pp. 79-91.

11. Kamata, ibid., p. 191.

12. Hu Shih, Shen-hui ho-shang i-chi, pp. 286-7.

13. Yanagida, Dango no taishō hyō, pp. 8-9.

14. Ibid., pp. 23-4.

15. Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, p. 137.

16. Hu Shih, ibid., pp. 120-21.

17. Ibid., p. 122.

18. Ibid., p. 286.

19. Kamata, ibid., pp. 191-94.

20. The other possibilities are (a) gradual enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation, (b) gradual enlightenment and then sudden cultivation, and (c) sudden cultivation and then sudden enlightenment.

21. Kamata, ibid., p. 345.

22. Yanagida, ibid., pp. 23-4; cf. Hu Shih, ibid., p. 252.

23. T 85 (2834)1274a; corrected text in Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, Vol. I, p. 451.

24. T 85 (2833)1271b; T 48 (2009)367c-d.

25. Certainly there are no Buddhists who would advocate that one concentrate on controlling one of the six senses while allowing the others to be entirely uncontrolled and "go on a wild rampage." The author is indebted to Professor David Kalupahana for pointing out this potential confusion.

26. T 85 (2839)1272a.

27. A footnote in the Chinese text states: "Seeing, hearing, experiencing and knowing--all that experiences forms."

28. T 85 (2839); translated from Ui's text, ibid., p. 514.

29. T 85 (2834)1275a; Ui, ibid., p. 456.

30. Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien pei-tsung, in Ui, ibid., p. 472.

31. Ibid.

32. This separation of chih and hui does seem explainable on the model of eight levels of consciousness. Chih is the mind which is internally undisturbed and non-dichotomous, but such a mind could be disturbed by emotional reactions to external stimuli. One who tranquilizes sense-perceptions (hui aspect) only attains the "incorrect concentration" discussed in chapter two.

The *hui* aspect includes activity of craving and avoiding, and this would seem to correspond to the five senses plus mind. *Chih,* non-dichotomous intuitive insight, could then correspond to the seventh level of consciousness, *manas*. This understanding was suggested by the quotation on the previous page concerning the "internal spiritual guide."

33. T 85 (2839)1292c; T 85 (2934)1273b, 1274c; Ui, *ibid.*, p. 471.

34. It should be noted that "sudden" and "gradual" do not correspond to "easy" and "difficult." We are not justified in concluding that the follower of the gradual path cannot be enlightened in this very life. He simply progresses by means of steps and stages, whereas the sudden person is able to leap over stages. The sudden path could be much more difficult than the gradual path, and it could also take longer to traverse than the gradual path.

35. Recall that the famous debate of Lhasa in the ninth century was over the issue of gradual versus sudden enlightenment, and the gradualist position, represented by Kamalaśila, won over the Ch'an position, and gradualism became the official doctrine of Tibetan Buddhism.

36. T 85 (2833)1273b2.

37. T 48 (2009)369c10. Cf. Suzuki, *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū*, supplementary volume 1, pp. 641-2. Italics mine.

38. Hu Shih, *ibid.*, p. 175, 287; emphasis mine.

39. Kamata, *ibid.*, p. 191, 192.

40. Pure Land Buddhism held that in this last age of the dharma, people's abilities would be so low, and conditions so bad, that the only escape available would be to have faith in the saving compassionate power of Amitabha. The final period of the decay of the dharma was thought by the Chinese to have begun from A.D. 550, about a hundred years before Shen-hsiu's floruit (Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, p. 345).

41. *Kuan-hsin lun*, T 85 (2933)1271c; Suzuki, *ibid.*, p. 616.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 1272a; Suzuki, *ibid.*, p. 622.

43. *Ibid.*; Suzuki, *ibid.*, p. 623-4.

44. T 85 (2833)1272b; Suzuki, ibid., pp. 625-6.

45. Ibid., p. 1272c27; Suzuki, ibid., p. 635.

46. Ibid., p. 1273a24; Suzuki, ibid., p. 640.

47. Yanagida, Shoki no zenshi, vol. I (Zen no goroku II), Tokyo, 1971, p. 213, 220.

48. In a personal communication in July 1976, John McRae informed me that he felt that Shen-hsiu composed the Kuan-hsin lun after he left Hung-jen (the Fifth Patriarch), which would place the date of composition between 676 and his death in 706. Yanagida dates the Leng-chia shih-tzu chi between 719-720, twelve years before Shen-hui instituted his attacks upon Northern Ch'an. Ho-tsê Shen-hui continued these attacks upon Northern Ch'an from 732 until his death in 762.

49. Specifically, Seng-chao (374-414) in his Chao-lun, and in Han-shan Tê-ching's commentary upon the Chao-lun. Seng-chao calls upāya "the power of one thought which contains both expediency and prajñā," which Tê-ching glosses as "the double truth of non-differentiation between upāya and prajñā." Han-shan Tê-ching, Chao-lun Han-shan chu, Taiwan, 1958, pp. 6A-B of chuan 1. The above translation came from class notes for a seminar on the Chao-lun taught by Professor Chang Chung-yuan in the fall of 1973, and the quoted translation is most likely that of Professor Chang.
We might also call attention to the fact that numerous important Chinese Buddhists insisted upon the ultimate identification of saṁvṛti-satya and paramārtha-satya. For example, T'ien-t'ai Chih-i insisted that there was "perfect harmony in the three-fold truth," and explained that this meant that the truth of the middle is identical with the worldly truth, and also identical with the highest truth (see W. T. Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, pp. 403-4). The same conclusion seems present in the thought of Fa-tsang, the founder of the Hua-yen tradition (Chan, ibid., especially p. 410).

50. Suzuki, Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, London, 1949, p. 31.

51. Luk, The Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra, p. 22. Note that "sharp roots" and "dull roots" are the terms which we have previously translated as "superior ability" and "inferior ability."

52. Hu Shih, Shen-hui ho-shang i-chi, p. 277.

53. Ibid., pp. 132-3.

54. ZZ 14.277B10-12.

55. From the Shen-hui yü-lu, in Arthur Waley's translation in Buddhist Texts Through the Ages, E. Conze, ed., pp. 299-300. Cf. Hu Shih, ibid., p. 121.

56. This idea was suggested to me by a remark of Professor Jaini during a conference discussion on Tibetan Buddhism in July 1976.

57. Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, pp. 152-3.

58. Edward Conze describes nirvikalpa-jñāna as follows: "Though without concepts, judgments and discrimination, it is nevertheless not just mere thoughtlessness. It is neither a cognition nor a non-cognition; its basis is neither thought nor non-thought, for though it does not think and reflect it issues from wise attention. . . . There is here no duality of subject and object. The cognition is not different from that which is cognized, but completely identical with it" (Buddhist Thought in India, p. 253).

59. Yanagida, Dango no taishō hyō, p. 19.

60. I do not want to assert that there are no differences whatsoever between wu-nien and nirvikalpa. This is a topic about which one could write another dissertation.

61. Interestingly enough, Ho-tsê Shen-hui's sudden enlightenment does not catapult one to the tenth level of the Bodhisattva--just to the seventh level. He says, if you realize "what I have today explained as prajñāpāramitā, from the gateway of saṁsāra you will instantaneously enter the gateway of suchness, . . . and you will attain the seventh level of the Bodhisattva, as did all the Bodhisattvas of the past who bypassed [the first six stages]." Yanagida, ibid., p. 19.
The significance of the seventh stage for Ho-tsê Shen-hui is not made clear in the texts, but there are reasons why he might see this as the goal of sudden enlightenment. First of all, sudden enlightenment is not perfect and complete enlightenment (samyak sambodhi) because further development is required. Secondly, according to the Prajñāpāramitā-śastra, the first six stages may be considered preparatory, and the most decisive stage is the seventh. The text says:

This is the stage at which he attains complete

> freedom from all sense of clinging. And here he turns back from all false notions, all imaginative constructions [vikalpa] and all kleśas, and remains completely free from passion. . . . here he comprehends the ultimately true nature of things and rejects the ultimacy of particular natures [differentiated characteristics]. Here he achieves in his cultivation a balance between concentration [ting] and understanding [hui].

Translation from K. V. Ramanan, Nāgārjuna's Philosophy, pp. 306-7.

62. T 85 (2833)1273b2.

63. Yampolsky, ibid., pp. 152-3.

64. The method of kung-an (kōan in Japanese), associated with Lin-chi Ch'an and Rinzai Zen, also seems to fit this model. There the emphasis can be understood as being upon the solution of the initial kung-an, which results in a strong satori experience. However, this is then followed by a long course of refinement of the heart which can take ten years or more. Sometimes this kind of kung-an approach is also called "ladder Zen" (Sekida Katsuki, Zen Training, Weatherhill, 1975, p. 232). The clearest description of the kung-an process which clearly brings out its step-by-step nature is Ruth Fuller Sasaki's Zen Dust, Harcourt and Brace, 1966.

CHAPTER IV

The Charge of Dualism Against Northern Ch'an

> The then still existent Northern School of Zen taught purification of the mind, but Hui Neng, followed here by Huang Po, regarded this injunction as implying a dualism of pure and impure.
>
> John Blofeld[1]

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall attempt to clarify the nature of the objection of dualism which was made against Northern Ch'an by the Southern line. Did the latter believe that the former was maintaining that the *dharmadhatu* was modifications or modes of two different substances, or perhaps that the Northern line was arguing dualistically for non-dualism, or that Northern Ch'an's methods of cultivation were dualistic in conception and consequently could not be effective in

bringing about the liberation of the student into a non-dualistic understanding? We shall first attempt to answer these questions. We shall then examine Northern Ch'an doctrines, arguments, and practices to see if the Southern line's understanding of them was in fact accurate. With this we shall be in a position to come to some conclusion concerning the existence or non-existence of dualism in Northern Ch'an.

Earliest Criticisms of Northern Ch'an's Alleged Dualism

From the earliest period, it is evident that either the teachings or practices of Northern Ch'an have been understood to be dualistic in some fashion. Some of this criticism is associated with the poem attributed to Shen-hsiu found in the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*:

> The body is the Bodhi tree,
> The mind is like a clear mirror.
> At all times we must strive to polish it,
> And must not let the dust collect.[2]

Concerning this poem, Hui-neng is supposed to have said, "As soon as I heard it I knew that the person who had written it had yet to know his own nature and to discern the cardinal meaning."[3] The Fifth Patriarch, Hung-jen, is supposed to have told Shen-hsiu:

> This verse you wrote shows that you still have not reached true understanding. You have merely arrived at the front of the gate but have yet to be able to enter it. . . . But in seeking the ultimate enlightenment (*bodhi*), one will not succeed with such an understanding.[4]

Why is it that this poem does not demonstrate a completely enlightened understanding? We have previously seen that Southern Ch'an saw a gradual and sequential approach to enlightenment advocated by the last two lines of Shen-hsiu's poem, which the Southern line opposed with its doctrine of sudden enlightenment. However, some passages in the earliest documents suggest that another difficulty with Shen-hsiu's poem is that it displays a dualistic spirit which is incompatible with the non-dual truth. For example, in an attack upon Northern Ch'an, Hui-neng warns:

> Students, be careful not to say that meditation gives rise to wisdom, or that wisdom gives rise to meditation, or that meditation and wisdom are different from each other. To hold this view implies that things have duality. . . .[5]

The same point is made in the writings of Ho-tsê Shen-hui. For example, Shen-hui attacks "the view that concentration (ting) is to be practiced first and it is only after its attainment that prajñā is awakened." He goes on to say:

> But, according to my view, the very moment I am conversing with you, there is Dhyana, there is Prajna, and they are the same. . . . when Dhyana and Prajna are the same, this is called seeing into the Buddha-nature.[6]

Hui-neng criticizes the Northern Ch'an practice of "contemplating purity" (k'an ching), which perhaps is alluded to in Shen-hsiu's poem. Hui-neng charges that this sort of purity is a dualistic purity because it is attained as a result of eliminating impurity:

> This Dharma is not dual; neither is the mind.
> This Tao is pure and has no form at all.
> Take care not to contemplate purity or to
> make the mind empty.[7]

Ho-tsê Shen-hui seems to be saying the same thing in his Shen-hui yü-lu, but here he is more explicit on the mistake which the Southern line felt was committed: ". . . in the absence of defilements there is also absence of purity. Purity is still a characteristic. That is why one does not contemplate [purity]."[8] In his Platform Sermon, Shen-hui says, ". . . to speak of characteristics (hsing 相) is [the action of the] illusion [obscured] mind."[9] Both Hui-neng and Shen-hui imply that the distinction between purity and impurity is a conceptual dichotomy, and to hold this distinction as ultimate reveals that one has not yet attained a clear understanding of what-is.[10]

Another very early criticism of the Northern line is found in a dialogue in the Ch'uan-hsin fa-yao of Huang-po (d. 850). Ch'an master Huang-po is asked why the eminent scholar, Shen-hsiu, did not receive Bodhidharma's robe from the Fifth Patriarch and become his dharma-heir, and Huang-po replies:

> Because he still indulged in conceptual thought -- in a dharma of activity. To him, 'as you practice, so you shall attain' was a reality.[11]

Huang-po claims that he felt that Shen-hsiu was too conceptually oriented, and in the Ch'an tradition, to be conceptual is to create mental images of what-is, to analyze -- and to analyze is to divide or dichotomize. This is the error of seeing separations or categories in reality which are in fact only mind-created.

Hui-neng apparently considered duality in any form a very serious error which must be avoided. In his final words to his disciples (one of whom was Ho-tsê Shen-hui), Hui-neng advocates a non-dual approach as the proper way to teach others:

> As things rise and sink, you must separate from dualism. When you explain all things, do not stand apart from nature and form. . . . if in the end dualisms are all completely cast aside, there will be no place for them to exist.[12]

Modern Criticisms of Northern Ch'an's Alleged Dualism

Many contemporary scholars have also held that Hui-neng's poem was in fact a criticism of Shen-hsiu's dualistic understanding. For example, in a classical Chinese commentary upon the *Platform Sutra*, the author, Chih-hai, refers to Shen-hsiu's poem as follows:

> True reality is without [even] a shadowy image (*ying* 影) of squareness or roundness, brightness or darkness. How could it have the characteristic of being [like] the base of a mirror?[13]

In a recent Japanese text by D.T. Suzuki, it states:

> . . . finally, the Northern school was unable to discard its dualistic nature, and so, of course, it comes to appear in their Ch'an methods of cultivation as well. . . . Where could the impurities which are sprinkled on the surface of the mirror come from? Since the Northern line could never go beyond the standpoint of discriminative

> knowing, its methods of practice are also naturally tinged with a [subject] facing-an-object nature.[14]

The same points are made in Suzuki's English writings as well, particularly in his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, where he writes, "If the Mind is originally pure and undefiled, why is it necessary to brush off its dust, which comes from nowhere?"[15] He also says, "The attempt to reach light by dispelling darkness is dualistic . . . ."[16]

John Blofeld offered the same interpretation when he explained Huang-po's reaction to Shen-hsiu mentioned earlier:

> It is recorded in the Sutra of Hui-Neng, or Wei Lang, that a certain monk likened Mind to a mirror which must be cleansed of the defilements of delusion and passion, thereby involving himself in a duality between the transitory and the real. The two lines just quoted are from Hui-Neng's reply, in which the duality is confuted.[17]

Charles Luk explains Hui-neng's criticism as follows:

> The uprise of not seeing and not knowing is wrong because seeing and not seeing as well as knowing and not knowing are pairs of extremes which should be discarded so that the absolute can appear.[18]

Thus, the same reaction of dualism is found in the moderns, in Blofeld, in Luk, in Suzuki,[19] as well as the ancients.[20] Whether the descriptions are accurate or not is yet to be decided, but there does seem to be a fair unanimity of opinion on the matter.

We could continue quoting statements concerning the dualism found in Northern Ch'an, but let us instead proceed with a systematic examination of the various claims and

objections. We shall attempt to come to an understanding of the nature of the claims and their implications.

A quick review of the preceding quotations seems to indicate that these various scholars find dualism in Northern Ch'an in more than one area. One of Hui-neng's remarks claims that to hold the view that meditation and wisdom are anything other than identical "implies that things have duality . . . ."[21] It is also stated that the Northern Ch'an practice of contemplating purity involves one in a conceptual dualism of purity versus impurity. In other words, the complaint of dualism seems to include both (1) the talk about the practices, and (2) the doctrines of Northern Ch'an. Let us attempt to sort out the specifics in each of these two areas.

(1) Dualism in Methods of Practice or Cultivation.

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch charged that the Northern line was dualistic, and provided us with two examples of dualism in the practice of Northern Ch'an. The first was that the Northern line advocated "inspecting purity" (k'an ching), and a practice which discriminates between a pure and impure mind tends to focus upon the characteristics of things (whereas what-is is 'free from characteristics' 無相). As Suzuki remarks in his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, "...this is apt to lead the Yogin to the conception of something separate which retains its purity behind all the confusing darkness enveloping his individual mind."[22]

The second example provided claims that Northern Ch'an practice emphasized concentration (ting) in the mistaken belief that proficiency in concentration would give rise to insight (prajñā). Both of these objections are brought together in Suzuki's Zenshisōshi kenkyū, where he writes:

> In this 'inspecting' (k'an) is a dualistic residue which has by no means been eliminated. What is called purity, what is called unmoving, what is called mind -- whether it is 'inspecting within' or 'inspecting without' -- there remains a sharp distinction between the one inspecting and that which is inspected. . . . Namely, they do not seem to have been able to directly grasp the nonduality of concentration and insight. Purity stands opposed to impurity, unmoving is contrasted with moving, mind is contrasted with thinking, and 'before' must be separated from 'behind'.[23]

(2) Dualisms in Northern Ch'an Doctrine.

We have noticed the repeated attacks upon the Northern Ch'an alleged separation of purity and impurity, which the Southern line has argued is only a conceptual separation and does not correspond to reality itself. As long as this conceptual separation is given any ultimate validity, Hui-neng and the others bitterly oppose it. One aspect of this separation is found in Suzuki's Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, where the author relates the separation of purity and impurity to the Northern Ch'an practice of k'an 看 ('seeing,' 'contemplating,' or 'inspecting'). Suzuki claims that k'an is, in virtue of the very structure of the Chinese character, a dualistic seeing, it is "to watch an object as independent of the spectator,"

whereas the Southern line's use of the related Chinese character, chien 見 (as in "seeing one's own nature") avoids this because it "brings the seer and object seen together, not in mere identification but the becoming conscious of itself, or rather of its working." Suzuki then continues:

> The utterance, 'from the first not a thing is,' thus effectively destroys the error which attaches itself too frequently to the idea of purity. . . . it somehow tends to create a separate entity outside the 'one who sees'. The fact that k'an has been used with it [purity] proves that the error [of separation] has actually been committed.[24]

Also, in his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, Suzuki says "at the time of Hui-neng, the idea of separation was emphasized by Shen-hsiu and his followers, and the result was exercises in purification; that is, in dust-wiping meditation."[25]

The second objection to Northern Ch'an doctrines found in the oldest texts asserts that any teaching which claims that concentration gives rise to insight is implying a sequential, or cause-effect analysis of the relationship between the two, and this is dualistic--apparently the only way of avoiding this dualism is to assert that concentration and insight are identical, as Hui-neng continually does in his Platform Sutra.[26]

The third objection of Hui-neng is a brief mention of the mind in the context of Northern Ch'an. He says that the mind is not dual, and implies that Northern Ch'an thought it was.[27]

These are the examples provided in the very oldest Ch'an documents concerning Northern Ch'an. However, the more recent

scholars have provided many more examples of a doctrinal dualism in Northern Ch'an. D.T. Suzuki in particular has written:

> [In Northern Ch'an] body and mind are always divided into two, and are always placed separate facing one another, and so a forceful effort, a reversal of illumination, an inspecting of something pure and clear near at hand is absolutely essential to be sought after.

And:

> 'From the very beginning, not a single thing,' and when we say that there is no thinking from which one must be free, from the very beginning, then one does not permit the standpoint of relative pairs, such as body and mind, purity and impurity, realization and non-realization, substance and function, tranquillity and illumination, moving and unmoving, etc. All of these are, from the very beginning, Suchness; they are ungraspable . . . .[28]

Suzuki also asserts that a commonly used phrase in Northern Ch'an, that of being "free from thinking" (離念), is, "to all appearances, a dualism."[29] His reasoning behind this seems to be to simply note the tendency in Northern Ch'an to analyze things into pairs, separating one from another. As we noted earlier, in his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, Suzuki wrote that "at the time of Hui-neng, the idea of separation was emphasized by Shen-hsiu and his followers . . . ,"[30] and he previously stated, concerning the notion of "purity" in Northern Ch'an, that it is apt to lead to "the conception of something separate which retains its purity behind all the confusing darkness . . . ."[31] This idea of separation is a reference to the use of the character li, as is made very

clear in Suzuki's Japanese writing which utilizes Chinese characters instead of English words:

> 'To be free from' (li) is a dividing separation (li), it is two things facing each other in opposition, so I think we can see it as a view which supports a dualistic approach.[32]

Utilizing the examples in the ancient Ch'an texts by Hui-neng, Ho-tsê Shen-hui, Tsung-mi and Huang-po, plus the other examples provided by the English and Japanese contemporary authors, we have an outline with which we can analyze Northern Ch'an philosophy. Our next step is to set out a detailed list of places where we might expect to find dualism in Northern Ch'an; after that we can analyze the actual thought of Northern Ch'an to see if it is in fact guilty of the errors which Southern Ch'an claimed to find. It is only after this that we will be in a position to evaluate the charge of dualism.

At the beginning of this chapter we suggested three possible interpretations of the charge of dualism. On the basis of the numerous quotations from the literature of Southern Ch'an, we are in a position to determine the exact nature of the criticisms of Northern Ch'an. The passages quoted continually point to the Northern Ch'an tendency to analyze things into pairs -- sometimes contraries, sometimes contradictories, and sometimes sequentially related pairs (such as concentration and insight). This alone makes it clear that the Southern line is not accusing the Northern school of maintaining a dualism in its most common form, i.e., that there are two different substances which make up reality. Besides,

even a cursory reading of Northern Ch'an texts makes it evident that Northern Ch'an maintained an explicit non-dualistic interpretation of reality. For example, in the existent fragment of Shen-hsiu's Miao-li yüan-ch'eng kuan, Shen-hsiu states:

> Impurity and purity arise due to mind.
> . . .
> What we call "causally produced dharmas"
> are all without any self-nature,
> And so, emptiness and existence are not-two.[33]

The philosophy of Northern Ch'an is clearly influenced by numerous texts which adopt a non-dual position, especially the Vimalakīrti sūtra. In one of the five upāya texts we find numerous brief statements which make this point very clearly. For example: "Suchness is pure and clear, non-dual (wu-erh). Thus, non-duality is being free from discrimination and continuous (wu-tuan 無斷)."[34] Another line says, "perfectly comprehending [the truth of] non-differences [among all dharmas] of itself is the way of unobstructed liberation."[35]

If Northern Ch'an was not accused of holding a dualistic position in its most obvious form, what is the objection? It seems to be that the teaching in Northern Ch'an continually utilizes pairs which are not declared to be non-dual, and this pair-approach is included in the meditation and cultivation practices of the Northern line. A related objection is that the methods of cultivation were not effective in bringing about enlightenment, perhaps because dualistic understanding of cultivation practices gets in the way of enlightenment.

Ho-tsê Shen-hui says:

> If I taught people to sit, to concentrate their minds and enter concentration, to settle their minds and preserve the serenity, to arouse their minds to illuminate the external world, or to control the mind to seek inner illumination -- all of these would be an obstacle to bodhi.[36]

A related objection to this is that Shen-hsiu himself was not fully enlightened.[37] These two objections are very difficult to deal with because they do not seem to be philosophical at all. It seems to be highly presumptuous to attempt to evaluate whether some Chinese master who lived over 1200 years ago was genuinely and profoundly enlightened. Certainly we have no philosophical criteria to establish this. And the objection of whether the Northern Ch'an practices are effective for leading to enlightenment seems to be a rather straightforward empirical claim. In theory at least, it would seem to be resolved by simply checking to see how many of the followers of Northern Ch'an were fully enlightened. If we find a large number, then the claim would be shown to be incorrect. If, on the other hand, very few or none of the Northern Ch'an followers were recognized as enlightened,[38] it would seem to lend support to Ho-tsê Shen-hui's claim. Either way, these issues seem to be non-philosophical; it does not seem to be open to philosophers to be able to pass judgment on the ultimate efficacy, or lack of efficacy, of any particular meditation approach. Theory will not do this -- only practice can. Consequently, these issues will not be pursued.

So far we have established that Southern Ch'an claimed that the Northern Ch'an modes of teaching were dualistic, although their ultimate description of reality was not. There does not seem to be any serious problem with this as it stands. The Southern line's objection must be stronger than this. I believe that the objections are the following: (1) dualistic explanations, or philosophy, cannot lead to non-dualistic insight; (2) dualistic practices cannot lead to non-dualistic realization. For reasons mentioned above, the second objection is one which is not appropriate to deal with in a philosophical treatment of Northern Ch'an. However, for (1) to have any real weight against Northern Ch'an, there has to be a following suppressed claim, namely that Northern Ch'an actually believed that dualistic arguments could lead to non-dualistic insight! If Northern Ch'an did not hold any such view, then the charge of dualism seems to be rather unimportant. Another suppressed claim is required also to make the objections as serious as the Southern line made them out to be, i.e., that Northern Ch'an did not recognize that their dualistic conceptual structure was lacking in any ultimacy, that by its very nature it could not possibly be the highest truth. Even if we can show that Northern Ch'an consistently utilized a dualistic structure in their philosophy, this will be a serious error only if such a philosophy regarded its positions as corresponding with the highest truth. If the two suppressed claims cannot be supported, then this charge of dualism seems

to be weakened considerably.

We have discussed a number of different objections to Northern Ch'an related to the issue of dualism. Before examining the Northern Ch'an texts themselves, we shall summarize the objections treated so far.

(1) Objections to Northern Ch'an philosophy.

(a) Northern Ch'an philosophy utilizes conceptual pairs, which are never identified in the texts, such as:
mind and body (form);
mind and thinking;
purity and impurity;
unmoving (being undisturbed) and moving;
realization and non-realization;
substance (essence) and function;
other dualisms created by the use of the Chinese character li.

(b) Northern Ch'an philosophy, being dualistic, cannot allow for a genuine escape from a dualistic structure, which is required for a true non-dual insight.

(c) Northern Ch'an philosophy utilizes dualistic pairs without realizing that all dualistic conceptual patterns lack ultimacy.

(2) Objections to Northern Ch'an's Description of its Practice.

(a) Northern Ch'an consistently describes its practices in a dualistic manner. For example:

inspecting purity (k'an ching), as a meditative practice, encourages the conceptual separation of purity and impurity;
teaching that concentration (ting) leads to insight implies that these are two, separate, and not non-dual.

(b) Northern Ch'an practice advocates a reversal of direction (the student moves from impurity to purity), but reversing direction occurs within dualism and is not a transcending of dualism.

(c) Practices based upon a dualistic conceptual structure cannot be effective for liberating one from dualistic thinking, and so Northern Ch'an practices could not be effective for bringing one to non-dual insight.[39]

The above list includes, as points (b) and (c) under each heading, those claims which seem implied by the criticisms of Southern Ch'an. If the criticisms of the Southern line are to have any weight, it would seem that points (b) and (c) must be demonstrated to be true.

The Philosophy of Northern Ch'an

In this section we shall investigate the writings of the Northern line to ascertain if there is a genuine dualism

implicit or explicit, in its texts. Then, we shall examine the system, in its broader outline, to see whether objections (b) and (c) can be shown to be true, or refuted. We shall deal with the allegedly dualistic pairs in approximately the same order that they were listed on the previous pages.

THE DUALISM OF PURITY VERSUS IMPURITY

Purity is discussed in the context of the pure mind, and also in the context of "inspecting purity" (k'an ching), an important element in Northern Ch'an practices. In Shen-hsiu's Kuan-hsin lun, the contrast between the pure mind and the defiled (or impure) mind is especially clear:

> . . . from the mind arises functioning (yung), two varieties of which are distinguished. What are these two? The first is the pure mind, and the second is the defiled mind. These two types of mind are the dharmadhātu just as it is. From the very beginning, both exist . . . . If you are not craving that which is defiled, you can be called a Sage. Thereupon, one can be far removed from all duhkha . . . . If you are in accord with the defiled mind, you create karma.[40]

The text goes on to say that the defiled mind "obstructs suchness itself." The source of this defiled mind is found within mind itself: "Mind, from within its very nature (pen-t'i 本體), by itself produces the Three Poisons."[41] The Three Poisons, a central Buddhist idea, are dosa (anger, or hatred), rāga, or lobha (craving, or greed), and moha (confusion, folly, or ignorance), and these three are the source

of evil karma. Although these Three Poisons are generated from within the very nature of the mind, the external world is also involved, for the Poisons are aroused by the functioning of the senses. The text states:

> . . . the six senses are also called the "Six Thieves." And those Six Thieves are also called the six vijñāna. Coming in and out of the various sense organs there is craving and attachment within the myriad realms. This can become evil karma and spoil suchness itself. . . . All sentient beings give birth to these Three Poisons and use these Six Thieves. . . . One who seeks liberation will discard both the Three Poisons and the use of the Six Thieves.[42]

Shen-hsiu adds, "the three realms of karmic retribution arise solely due to mind," and "simply be able to control the mind and you will be free from falsehood and evil."[43] It has become clear that the defiled mind is that aspect of mind which "obstructs suchness," and is the realm of craving and attachment, and the realm aroused by the functioning of the senses when they are attached and craving (Six Thieves).

The pure mind, on the other hand, is described as the aspect of mind which is free from (li 離)[44] the activity of thinking, or conceptualization (nien 念). It is the aspect of consciousness which is independent of the analytical, and independent of those aspects of perception dominated by the Six Thieves and Three Poisons. The pure mind is not simply the mind which is detached from the thinking process, but almost seems to be an "ultimate consciousness" which is totally independent of all conceptualizing functions of our defiled

mind. This is later identified with Awakening itself in the text entitled Verses in Praise of Ch'an: "The meaning of Awakening is the mind itself which is free from thinking."[45] The Northern line's texts take this expression, borrowed from the Awakening of Faith, and turn it into a central theme which appears throughout their writings, developed with a great many variations. For example, in the Gateway of Unborn Upāya in the Mahayana, the following passage appears:

> The Buddha-mind is pure and clear, free from existence and free from non-existence. Body and mind not arising is constantly keeping guard upon the true mind. This extinction is true suchness. Mind not arising is the mind of true suchness; form not arising is form as true suchness. Because mind is true suchness, mind is emancipated. Because form is true suchness, forms are emancipated. Mind and forms both free (li) is 'not a single thing,' and is the great Bodhi-tree.[46]

The Buddha-mind is the pure mind, and the pure mind is explicitly equated with suchness, or ultimate reality.[47] Later, the same text states: "If the mind is undisturbed (wu-tung), the mind is suchness, and is intuitive wisdom (chih 智)."[48]

The Northern line does discuss the defiled mind as an aspect of consciousness which must be eliminated; we get to the pure mind ("the mind itself which is free from thinking") by eliminating the impurities which obscure its illumination, in the same way that the clouds cover the illumination of the sun.[49]

We purposely refer to these two as "aspects" of consciousness so as to leave open the question of whether this is

dualistic, two-mind theory, or whether a non-dualistic interpretation is available. We have certainly found what appears to be a dualistic pair--purity and impurity--but is this the dualistic pair which the Southern school claimed it to be? Ho-tsê Shen-hui pointed out that when the defilements are gone, so too "there is absence of purity. Purity is still a [relative] characteristic. This is why one does not contemplate [purity]."[50] However, we must note that this kind of terminology is not foreign to Southern Ch'an, and in fact, reference to a pure mind (or a "true mind," or "Buddha-mind") can be found in almost all of the Ch'an literature of the period.

The pure mind is equated with Suchness by the Northern line, which is to say, it is the pure mind which perceives things as they truly are--free from conceptualization and free from thinking (li nien). This is the mind which also is undisturbed, not attached to forms, and free from the Three Poisons of anger, craving, and ignorance. Shen-hsiu describes the pure mind in a very traditional Ch'an manner when he says:

> All the teachings of Buddhism
> Originally exist from [the pure] mind.
> If you try to grasp mind by seeking outwardly,
> You are running away from your own father.[51]

Clearly, it is false thinking which constitutes the defiled mind: "Awakening [from] false thinking, one understands body and mind, and one penetrates Fundamental Awakening (pen-chüeh 本覺)."[52] It is the realm of conceptualization, and the realm of

attachments which make up the realm of the defiled mind; when the defiled mind is the way we organize our perceptions of the world, the world becomes defiled as well:

> The eye sees [and there is] conceptualizing; thoughts arise and numerous concepts are born; there are divisions and barricades, and one does not understand. Accordingly, this is the defiled universe, the realm of the sentient being . . . .[53]

When the Six Thieves are active, there is craving for, and attachment to things perceived and conceptualized, combined with a fundamental misunderstanding of the true nature of all things, and these generate present duḥkha and evil karma in future states.

Contrasted with this, the pure mind is the mind when it is free from the activity which defiles the world. This would seem to demonstrate that we are not dealing with any sort of "two mind" theory. In fact, the entire distinction between pure and impure can be demonstrated to be anything but an ultimate distinction in the Northern line. In the shortest of the Northern Ch'an texts, the *Ta-ch'eng pei-tsung lun*, this contrast between pure and defiled aspects of mind is completely minimized:

> I do not even give rise to a mind of compassion;
> How much less a mind of poisonous spite?
>
> I do not even give rise to a mind of purity and clarity;
> How much less a mind of foulness and impurity?
> . . .
> I do not even give rise to a mind which is genuine and true;
> How much less to an inverted mind?

> I do not even give rise to a mind of Enlightenment;
> How much less to a mind of defilement?
>
> I do not even give rise to a mind of liberation;
> How much less to a mind of defilement?[54]
>
> I do not even give rise to a mind of Nirvana;
> How much less to a mind of samsara?[55]

Although the dichotomy between the pure and defiled mind, and the related pairs such as Nirvana and samsara, liberation and bondage, etc. is not absolutely denied, it is clearly relegated to an inferior realm.

Yet, the Northern line still could be guilty of working within dichotomous pairs, and not recognizing their lack of ultimacy. Are they eliminating one half of a dichotomous pair, and merely reversing direction within a dualistic framework? Although no Northern Ch'an text seems to approach the problem in quite this way, another short Northern Ch'an text states:

> The name we give to the eradication of defilements is 'samsara.'
> The name we give when there is no eradication of defilements is 'Nirvana.'
>
> The name we give to the awareness of liberation is 'samsara.'
> The name we give when there is no awareness of liberation is 'Nirvana.'
>
> The name we give to the awareness of Nirvana is 'samsara.'
> The name we give when there is no awareness of Nirvana is 'Nirvana.'[56]

This clearly shows that the Northern line was aware of the duality problem inherent in such formulations. The pure mind is claimed to be beyond all divisions, and the division of

pure and impure must also be included. To eliminate one half of a pair still confines one to the conditioned realm of birth and death. To be aware of being liberated is to choose liberation over bondage, and, in Ch'an Buddhism, this is to remain in the conditioned realm of birth and death. To be aware of the attainment of Nirvana is again to remain in the conditioned realm of birth and death. One cannot have purity by the elimination of impurity--if this were what Northern Ch'an advocated, then it would indeed seem to be guilty of dualistic thinking as charged by Hui-neng, Ho-tsê Shen-hui, and others. However, the text just quoted makes it clear that Northern Ch'an rejects these categories as having any ultimacy; in fact, Northern Ch'an rejects the entire picture of complementary pairs as being an inadequate framework for dealing with the world as it truly is. The Northern Ch'an text states that it is only when no categories are accepted as pure or impure, when there is no awareness of liberation, no awareness of bondage, no awareness of defilement, no awareness of Nirvana--only then is the world perceived in its suchness, being just what it is. And it is this that Northern Ch'an has called the "pure mind." With the pure mind, the world also becomes pure and clear, although it is not a purity achieved by erasing all defilements from the world:

> One knows that the six sense-organs are fundamentally undisturbed, and the essence of Awakening is suddenly perfected;

> illumination shines, everywhere reflecting . . . .
> Because the mind is free from thinking, all realms and gunas are pure and clean . . . .[57]

For Northern Ch'an to live in a realm of clear awareness is to be free from thinking; when there is pure awareness and no misplaced conceptualization, one reaches the innate fundamental undisturbed conscious awareness in which "things as they truly are" presents itself to us without any of the distorting processes which create a defiled world out of the realm which in itself is simply suchness.

It has been demonstrated that the dichotomy between a pure aspect of mind and a defiled aspect of mind is not an actual part of the Northern Ch'an understanding. The defiled mind is the consciousness when it is acting conceptually, i.e. when dichotomization is interpositioned between a person's spontaneous reaction and his actual response (which is thus "defiled"). The pure mind is not a separate mind from the defiled mind; it is simply the mind when it is "free from thinking" (li nien). In this sense, these two aspects of consciousness are separable, but only in the sense that one can live in such a way that one is free from thinking; one can react non-conceptually and spontaneously. In this way, the pure mind would be the most fundamental of the two aspects, for it is consciousness prior to differentiation, and as such, it is continually existent, whether dichotomous thinking is going on or not. According to Northern Ch'an, when one has eliminated "erroneous imaginings, thoughts and discriminations," this is the pure mind.[58]

Although we earlier suggested that this division of pure and impure aspects of mind was due to the Awakening of Faith, there is no need to see this as the only source. Probably equally important to the Northern line was the Vimalakīrti sūtra, where we find the same kind of division. Vimalakīrti explains to Upāli, "false thoughts are impure and the absence of false thought is purity. Inverted (ideas) are impure and the absence of inverted (ideas) is purity."[59] And, in the chapter on the non-dual teaching, we find another passage which recalls an earlier quoted Northern text:

> Impurity and purity are a duality. When the underlying nature of impurity is clearly perceived, even purity ceases to arise.[60]

This would seem to be a part of the inspiration for the text which said:

> I do not even give rise to a mind of purity and clarity; How much less to a mind of foulness and impurity?[61]

This seems to be simply another way of saying what Ho-tsê Shen-hui said: ". . .in the absence of defilements, there is also absence of purity."[62] Earlier we suggested that the point of the Southern line's criticism is that purity and impurity is a conceptual dichotomy, and to hold this distinction as ultimately true of the world is to reveal that one has not yet attained a clear understanding of the non-dual truth. It is clear that the Northern line did not hold this distinction as being ultimately true. Consequently, we seem justified in concluding that the Northern line was not maintaining a

conceptual dualism with the pair purity vs. impurity.

We still have to consider the Northern Ch'an practice of "inspecting purity" (k'an ching), for here the language is very strongly dualistic. It seems to suggest that one is to actually be aware of a purity which is contrasted with defilement. We can recall D.T. Suzuki's strong criticism of this in his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, in which he argues that a seeing of purity is a dualistic seeing which commits the error of separating purity from impurity.[63] Suzuki went on to say that Northern Ch'an practice was infected by this dualistic separation, such that the followers of the Northern line were inclined to try to purify themselves utilizing "dust-wiping meditation."[64]

Yet, here too it is clear that the disciples of Northern Ch'an are not being encouraged to see some kind of pure mind when they are "inspecting purity." We have the following dialogue from the Ta-ch'eng wu-sheng fang-pien men which could have come from the pen of a master from the Southern school:

> Upon inspecting mind, if it is pure, it is called the pure mind realm. You should not focus inwardly upon body-mind, or focus outwardly the body-mind. [It should be a] relaxed, vast and far-away inspecting, an inspecting which everywhere exhausts the empty sky.
>
> The master said, questioning a monk: What do you see?
> The monk replied: Not a single thing to be seen.[65]

The reply, "not a single thing to be seen," (i wu pu chien 一物不見) puts a complete and total stop to all dualistic interpretations of the practice of "inspecting purity."[66]

However, we can see a difference in the Northern line's approach to pairs and the approach found in the Southern line. Nowhere in the Northern texts can we find the strong kind of non-dualistic language which is typical of Hui-neng and Ho-tsê Shen-hui. The Northern writings speak of purity and impurity, and do not say clearly that either (1) purity and impurity are to be identified, or (2) purity and impurity are to be rejected. The Southern line's writings do say precisely that sort of thing. Although the Northern line has been shown to be aware of the potential difficulty involved with the use of a conceptual pair like purity and impurity, it continues to utilize the terminology in its descriptions. However, it is clear that Northern Ch'an held that, from the point of view of the ultimate truth (paramārtha satya), when one practices "inspecting purity," nothing at all is seen. In another Northern text, the same point is made even more clearly:

> Question: As for this 'inspecting,' while one is inspecting, what thing is inspected?
> Reply: While one is inspecting, one inspects no thing.
> Question: Who is it that is inspecting?
> Reply: The Awakened mind inspects. Thoroughly inspecting the realms in all ten directions, pure and clear; it is without a single thing. Constant inspecting without any attachment to any place--this is Buddhahood. Clear, clear; inspect, inspect! Inspecting is non-abiding. Profound and deep; free from extremes and limits. That which is undefiled is nothing other than the mark of enlightenment.[67]

Here is a clear statement of the process of inspecting (k'an) from the highest point of view. Yet, the texts continue to

speak of inspecting purity, and from the lower point of view (saṁvṛti satya), it seems perfectly acceptable to continue to talk about purity and impurity. It appears to be this that the Southern line is objecting to so strongly.[68]

It must be concluded that the objection to the Northern Ch'an philosophy concerning purity and impurity, as a dichotomous pair, must be rejected. It has also been shown that the objection to the Northern Ch'an description of its practice of inspecting purity must also be rejected. There is no duality here except on the mundane level of ordinary speech, and the Northern texts have clearly shown that they do not have any intention of maintaining such a dichotomy on the ultimate level.

Other Alleged Dualisms in Northern Ch'an

There were several other alleged dualisms in the thought of the Northern line, e.g., body (form) and mind, mind and thinking, moving (disturbed) and unmoving (undisturbed), realization versus non-realization, and substance and function (t'i-yung 體用). The above pairs are mentioned in the writings of the Northern line, but are not discussed as extensively as the pair of purity and impurity.

Body (form) and mind

We will proceed by quoting some typical statements about body and mind in the writings of Northern Ch'an:

> Body and mind achieve freedom from thinking (li nien). Not seeing mind, mind is Suchness and the mind achieves emancipation. Not seeing the body, form is Suchness and the body is emancipated. . . . Body and mind not arising is constantly keeping guard on the true mind. . . . Mind not arising is the mind of true Suchness; form not arising is form as true Suchness. Because mind is true Suchness, mind is emancipated; because form is true Suchness, form is emancipated. Mind and form both free (li), is "not a single thing," and is the great Bodhi tree.[69]

And, again:

> Being free from mind, mind is Suchness; being free from forms, forms are Suchness. Mind and forms both Suchness is "realization perfectly complete," and perfectly complete realization is Tathagata. Again, the mind-sense not arising, mind is Suchness; the five senses not arising, forms are Suchness; mind and forms both Suchness, there is no following after the arising of objective conditions.[70]

The Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien pei-tsung states:

> The mind tranquil, Awakening shines distinctly.
> The body tranquil, this is the tree of Bodhi.[71]
> . . . Not seeing mind, mind is not born;
> not seeing the body, body does not die.
> Not seeing either body or mind -- just this is
> going straightforwardly through life-and-death.[72]
>
> Awakening [from] false thinking, one understands body and mind, and penetrates to Fundamental Awakening. Awakening [from] false thinking is Initial Awakening; penetrating body and mind is Fundamental Awakening. Initial Awakening is the Buddha Way (Tao); Fundamental Awakening is Buddahood itself (t'i).[73]

If one is free from mind, mind is Suchness.
If one is free from body, then body is Suchness.
Body and mind both being Suchness, they are
in accord with externals and yet do not arise.[74]

The last quotation is seen in a great number of variations throughout the Northern Ch'an texts. For example:

If one is free from mind, craving does not arise.
If one is free from forms, anger does not appear.
And, if form and mind are both free, folly and
ignorance are not manifested.
If one is free from mind, one transcends the realm
of desire.
If one is free from forms, one transcends the realm
of forms.
If both are freed, one transcends the formless realm.[75]

And:

Being free from mind is called 'non-arising.'
Being free from forms, characteristics are not born.
When one is free from both, one is without delusions.
Being free from mind is true wisdom.
Being free from forms is Suchness.
When one is free from both, this is True-Wisdom-
Suchness.

When mind is free, the delusory self-nature does
not arise.
When one is free from forms, the 'dependent-upon
others' self-nature does not arise.
When one is free from both, it is the complete
perfected self-nature.

When mind is free, one comprehends that human beings
are without an ego-self.
When forms are free, one comprehends that dharmas
are without an essence.
When both are free, one comprehends the wisdom of
the two non-selves.[76]

There are innumerable quotations based upon the models provided above. Almost every appearance of the pair, body (or form) and mind, are in this sort of structure. In fact, the presence of the above sort of structure seems to be one of

the unique characteristics of Northern Ch'an literature. It is most often utilized with any of the characteristic groups of three ideas found in Buddhist thought, e.g. the three realms, the three marks, the three self-natures, etc. Sometimes it is used with pairs, but the third element of the structure is then the simple addition of the first two elements, as above with (a) true wisdom, (b) Suchness, and (c) true-wisdom-suchness. This kind of tripartite structure is seen so often in Northern Ch'an writings that it begins to take on the feeling of a device which is utilized because of the neatness with which it works, rather than utilized for spiritual insight. This structure demonstrates the typical Northern Ch'an resolution of the potentially dualistic separation of body and mind. Body, or form, is Suchness; mind is Suchness; both being Suchness, both are liberated. There is no attempt to utilize the stronger language of the Southern line here, which would assert either, or both of (1) body and mind are not two, or (2) ultimately one cannot make the distinction.

The question which is being raised in this case is the same question which arises in the other cases as well -- is the separation only to pertain to the level of worldly discourse, or are we to attach more importance to it? We were able to clearly demonstrate that the division of pure versus impure was simply mundane truth and not ultimate truth; we are not able to clearly demonstrate this for the pair body and mind.

Mind and Thinking

There is not very much on this division. The Chinese character hsin is used for both the 'pure mind' and the 'defiled mind,' whereas the activity of thinking (nien 念) is associated with the defiled aspect of consciousness. If we take 'mind' to be equivalent to the 'pure mind,' then the dichotomy of mind and thinking becomes simply the same division which we have already analyzed of purity vs. impurity. If we take 'mind' to be equivalent to the 'impure mind,' then mind and thinking are used as equivalents and there is no problem.

Unmoving and Moving

The characters translated as 'unmoving' (wu tung 無 動) have been previously translated as 'undisturbed' or 'unperturbed.' The mind undisturbed is the enlightened mind, according to the Northern Ch'an texts. "Mind undisturbed is concentration, it is intuitive wisdom (chih 智); it is reality (li 理). The hearing-sense [five senses] undisturbed is forms, which is appearances (shih 事), and is pure perception (hui 慧)."[77] When both mind and the senses are undisturbed, one has realized prajñā wisdom, and this is enlightenment according to Northern Ch'an. That being the case, the pair of 'unmoving' versus 'moving' can be discussed along with the next pair, realization and non-realization.

Realization and Non-Realization

This is the fundamental division of enlightenment versus ignorance, Bodhi versus avidyā, Awakening versus being unawakened, realization versus non-realization. Although this pair stands out as being fundamental, the Northern Ch'an writings do not spend very much space on the pair itself. The emphasis is upon Awakening, of course, but not as one half of a pair, and not in terms of a contrast between Awakening and non-Awakening. Rather, the emphasis is upon maintaining awareness of the innate purity of mind, which is naturally "free from thinking." Awakening is discussed in rather similar terms in the various Northern Ch'an texts. A typical example is the following, from the Ts'an Ch'an wen shih:

> The master said: 'Buddha' is a Sanskrit word, which in this country means 'Awakening' (chüeh 覺). The meaning of Awakening is 'the mind itself which is free from thinking.' . . . Buddha is Awakening. There are three kinds of Awakening. The first is Self Awakened, the second is Awakening Others, and the third is Awakening Perfected.
> Explanation: To be free from mind is called Self Awakened. To be free from forms is called Awakening Others. Mind and form both free is called Awakening Perfected. 'Perfected' is explained as one thought free, all is free, and one is free from both absence and no-absence . . . . This has been a brief summary of what is meant by the 'Three [varieties of] Awakening.'[78]

In another passage, we find a similar explanation of Awakening:

> To be free from thinking is called Intrinsic Awakening, and to be free from forms is called Initial Awakening.

> Form and mind both free, inner essence (hsing 性) and outward appearance (hsing 相) are perfectly interfused, the absolute and the particular (li and shih 理 事) both interpenetrate without obstacle.[39]

Generally speaking we do not find any passages which strongly contrast Awakening and non-awakening. However, we have already referred to a text which makes it clear that Northern Ch'an masters did not believe that there was any ultimacy to this division. The Ta-ch'eng pei tsung lun states:

> I do not even give rise to the mind of Enlightenment;
> How much less to a mind of defilement?
>
> I do not even give rise to the mind of liberation;
> How much less to a mind of bondage?[80]

Once again it is clear that the Northern line of Ch'an did not maintain any ultimacy to the distinction. The above verses demonstrate an awareness of the potential for misunderstanding and taking such categories as corresponding to ultimates, and these are clearly intended to forestall any attempt by the student to do this.

However, we can certainly note a difference in style or approach between the Southern school's writings and the Northern line's texts. The Northern line often speaks about Awakening, or Enlightenment (Bodhi), but the above reference is the only one which explicitly makes it clear that these are not to be taken as ultimates. However, in the Southern line, we see a consistent and frequent attempt to collapse such a dualistic structure before it can be built, and the way this is

done most often is to assert that ultimate identity of Enlightenment and the kleśa. This assertaion is seen in the Platform Sutra, but is stated most clearly in the writings of Ho-tsê Shen-hui. Shen-hui says this in his Platform Sermon and the Shen-hui yü-lu. Explaining why it is that the kleśa are identical with enlightenment, Shen-hui says: "Although illusion and enlightenment are distinguished as being different, the nature of enlightenment is fundamentally without any differences whatsoever."[81]

There can be little doubt that the Northern line was familiar with this Mahayana claim, which is seen in many different forms throughout the Mahayana literature translated into Chinese. For example, it is found in the Vimalakīrti sūtra, a central text for Northern Ch'an. To Prabhāvyūha, Vimalakīrti says, "kleśa are the bodhimaṇḍa . . . ,"[82] and to Śāriputra, he says, "the underlying nature of the Three Poisons are identical with liberation."[83] In another discussion with Śāriputra, which Ho-tsê Shen-hui quoted often, Vimalakīrti says that real meditation is not eliminating kleśa and yet entering Nirvana.[84] The very important Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra says that "kleśa are the true characteristic [of reality],"[85] and that the Three Poisons are the Way (Tao).[86] Finally, there is the famous passage in Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamikakārikā, "Between the two [i.e., nirvana and samsara] there is not the slightest difference whatsoever."[87]

Clearly, Ho-tsê Shen-hui and the Southern school placed great emphasis upon this point, and the Northern line did not emphasize it (at least in their writings which have survived).

Substance and function

Substance (or 'essence,' t'i 體 and function (or 'activity,' 'action,' yung 用) are basic terms in traditional Chinese philosophy, and have been important following the earliest use of the pair in the writings of the Neo-Taoist Wang Pi (226-249). The distinction itself seems equivalent to what a thing is, and what it does. Are these dualistic in Northern Ch'an? The clearest statement of the t'i-yung division is found in the Ta-ch'eng wu-sheng fang-pien men:

> That which is free from thinking is the substance (t'i), and seeing, hearing, experiencing, and knowing are called function (yung).
> Tranquil and yet constantly in action; acting (yung) and yet always tranquil. This is the identity of function and tranquillity. To be free from characteristics is called tranquillity . . . .[88]

The only other discussion of this distinction is found in the Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien tsung, which appears to be an expanded version of the previous quotation:

> Question: What is substance, and what is function?
> Reply: Being free from thinking is substance, and seeing, hearing, realizing, and knowing are the function.
> Tranquillity is substance; illumination is function.
> There is tranquillity and yet there is constant functioning. There is functioning and yet there is

> constant tranquillity. . . . When there is tranquil illumination, emptiness is not different from form. When there is illumination of tranquillity, form is not different from emptiness.[89]

This discussion of t'i and yung is, clearly, a description of the substance, or essence, of mind, and the activity, or function, of mind. The substance of mind is here equated with tranquillity, and its activity, or function, is illumination. And, as the text states, tranquillity and illumination seem to operate in a peculiar reciprocal manner: there is tranquil illumination (chi chao 寂照); there is illuminating tranquillity (chao chi 照寂). The text explains:

> Tranquil illumination; illuminating tranquillity. If there is tranquil illumination, then from [one's] nature arises characteristics. If there is illuminating tranquillity, there is the control of characteristics and a return to one's own nature. When there is tranquil illumination, emptiness is not different from form. When there is illuminating tranquillity, form is not different from emptiness. Tranquillity is expansion; illumination is contraction.[90] Expanding, everything is engulfed within the dharmadhatu; contracting, accordingly all exists within the tip of a hair.[91]

The concepts are not explained further, but the implication seems clear enough. Tranquillity and illumination seem related the way form and emptiness are. And, tranquillity is identified with the substance (of mind), and illumination identified with the function (of mind).[92] In addition, the Ta-ch'eng wu-sheng fang-pien men noted "the identity of function (yung) and tranquillity (chi)." Since tranquillity is the same as t'i, we have a statement of the identity of substance and function.

Once again, we have demonstrated that this pair is not understood as an ultimate duality by the Northern Ch'an masters. In fact, we have found here one of the clearer cases of the ultimate identification of the pair.[93]

The Claim that LI is Dualistic

The Chinese character li 離 appears throughout the literature of the Northern line of Ch'an, and is clearly a central concept. The ordinary dictionary meaning given for li does support a dualistic interpretation, for "separation" is the most common meaning given in all dictionaries.[94] Among the other definitions given are, "cut off, eradicate, exterminate, remove, abolish, get rid of, relinquish, apart from, leave behind." Its use in modern Japanese is almost entirely restricted to meanings related to "separation."[95] It is very easy to understand why D.T. Suzuki would write, (in his very influential Zen Doctrine of No-Mind) "...at the time of Hui-neng, the idea of separation was emphasized by Shen-hsiu and his followers . . . ." In his Japanese Zenshisōshi kenkyū, Suzuki makes it clear that he reads the Chinese character li as clear evidence of dualistic tendencies in Northern Ch'an:

> Li is a dividing separation, it is two things facing each other in opposition, so I think we can see it as a view which supports a dualistic approach [on the part of the Northern line].[96]

The character li is used in a variety of different contexts in the writings, but by far the single most important appearance of li is in a passage which we have quoted several times already: "The meaning of Awakening is the mind itself which is li thinking."[97] If li is understood to imply "separate", then the expression implies that the mind itself (hsin t'i) is separate from the active function of thinking. The further implication of this would be that it suggests that the student of Northern Ch'an should attempt to eliminate all thinking from the mind itself by consciously stopping the arising of thoughts. This was one way which the Southern line of Ch'an interpreted Northern Ch'an practice:

> . . . one who sits, concentrating the mind to enter concentration (ting), stopping the mind and inspecting purity . . . these are all obstacles to enlightenment.[98]

The question which we must deal with is the following: is this the correct way to interpret hsin-t'i li nien? This question can be answered only by making a thorough examination of the use of li in the many texts belonging to the Northern line of Ch'an.

The difficulty is that there is obviously more than one way to interpret the sense of li in the phrase, "the mind itself is free from (li) thinking." By considering the variety of possible meanings for li, we seem able to distinguish five general families of meanings for li:

(1) Given the expression "Y is *li* X," one possible sense suggested by the common dictionary definitions could be expressed by saying that Y is divided off from X, or that Y is apart from X, or that Y has abandoned X. This is the sense in which one would separate himself from bad company who provide a poor atmosphere for spiritual cultivation. This would mean that the phrase "the mind itself is free from thinking" could be explained as implying that the mind itself abandons, or rejects, thinking, or that the mind itself separates itself from the thinking process.

(2) Another sense of *li* could be expressed by saying that Y remains while X no longer exists, i.e., that X becomes non-existent for Y; things like X no longer arise within Y. This would imply that if one were *li* anger, then anger would no longer arise within one -- it would have been eliminated. Given the phrase, "the mind itself is *li* thinking," it would be understood as saying that in the essence of mind, thinking does not arise, or that there is no thinking.

(3) A third sense of *li* is "Y is independent of X and X is not essentially related to Y." This suggests that Y is more fundamental than X, and whether X exists or not, Y would remain unaffected by X. This sense might be best captured by saying that Y transcends X. This would then be understood as saying that the mind itself transcends

the thinking process in some way, and that the mind itself is fundamentally and essentially independent of thinking (it remains whether thinking is going on or not).

(4) A fourth possible sense for li would be "Y takes an attitude of mental detachment towards X." It implies that Y is not attached to X (or things like X), that Y can move freely among X's without being either attracted towards them, or repelled by them. Given the phrase, "the mind itself is li thinking," with this fourth interpretation it would mean that the mind itself is mentally detached from thinking.

(5) A fifth possible sense for li would be the claim that Y belongs in an entirely different category than X. In this case, the 'X' is the process of thinking, so "the mind itself is li thinking" would imply that the mind itself is beyond conceptualization, beyond thought, and inconceivable.

It would seem that the relationship between X and Y might be any one of the five above, and still be the relationship of "Y is li X." These five overlap considerably but are by no means identical; differing philosophical consequences are implied depending upon which li is adopted in the mind of the reader. Although we can render li by "free from," or "liberated from," in all of its appearances in the texts of Northern Ch'an, the question of whether it is a dualistic or a non-

dualistic "free from" remains unanswered so far. Clearly, the Southern line of Ch'an read it to be one of the first three senses discussed above. On the other hand, if it is read in either the fourth or fifth sense, no dualistic conclusions can be drawn.

When we examine the kinds of passages in which li appears, we cannot help but notice that li is used most often with strongly negative elements, such as kleśa (defilements), the Three Poisons, attachments, duḥkha, falsehood, evil, arrogance, fetters, etc. It is also used with terms which we might be inclined to call neutral, such as 'being,' 'non-being,' 'form,' and 'mind.' We do not find li used with positive elements such as Nirvana, Awakening, Bodhi, joy, compassion, etc.

The most important term most often coupled with li is nien 念 , or 'thinking.' What kind of thinking is this? Is nien neutral, or is it negative? If nien is associated with the distrubed mind, or the mind which mistakenly conceives of perception as the perception of essences (svabhāva) which remain unchanging, then nien would be negative for it is interfering with the perception of what-is. Hence, nien would not be used as a general term for all mental activity associated with 'thinking' in English, such as reasoning about, regarding, judging, imagination, or visualization. Instead, nien would seem to be an abbreviation for wang nien 妄念 , which might be translated 'incorrect thinking,' or 'wrong thinking.' This

is the process of drawing conclusions utilizing mental activity which is distorted by anger, hatred, fear, ignorance, misplaced expectations, personal desires and antipathies, or metaphysical views about what reality must be like established by distorted reasoning.

If nien can be shown to be an abbreviation for wang nien, then it would seem that the Northern line can utilize li in several of the senses distinguished, which seem dualistic, and yet the phrase "the mind itself which is free from thinking" would not have the dualistic implications which the Southern line of Ch'an seemed to find. For example, taking the first sense of li distinguished, we would get the following expression: "Awakening is the mind itself which has abandoned (or rejected) wrong thinking," which might be paraphrased as follows, "Awakening is the mind wherein the thinking process is not distorted by ignorance, attraction, repulsion, or by conceptual theories superimposed upon the world in a sort of epistemic grid." Taking the second sense of li distinguished above, we get "Awakening is the mind wherein wrong thinking does not occur." The third sense would be, "Awakening is the mind which is fundamentally and essentially independent of wrong thinking." The fifth and last sense of li did not require wang nien to be non-dual, for it simply claims that Awakening is the mind which cannot be conceptualized. The most important thing to notice about all of these is that none of them involve a dualistic position on the part of the Northern line,

although the basic form of the grammar of the expression would seem to suggest a dualism.

As it turns out, we have a passage from the Northern text Ta-ch'eng wu-fang-pien pei-tsung which makes it clear that wang nien is precisely what is meant by 'thinking':

> Buddha' is a Sanskrit term from India, and in our country it is 'Awakening.' In what place does Awakening exist? Awakening exists within the mind. Where does the mind exist? Mind exists within the body. Where does the body exist? The body exists within wrong thinking (wang nien).
> Awakening [from] wrong thinking, one understands body and mind, and penetrates to Fundamental Awakening. Awakening [from] wrong thinking is Initial Awakening; penetrating body and mind is Fundamental Awakening. Initial Awakening is the Buddha's Way (Tao); Fundamental Awakening is Buddahood itself.
> What we call 'Awakening' is the body and mind which is free from [wrong] thinking. To be free from thinking is the Way (Tao). When body and mind are free from thinking, illumination is inwardly ripened and matured, and one perceives (k'an) the pure and clear Dharmakaya, obtains and enters the Buddha Way.[99]

The above statement makes it clear that the Northern line is not advocating a dualistic view of the mind, in which the student cultivates a blank mind because all thinking is to be avoided. The Northern line is not advocating "the stopping of the mind" as Ho-tsê Shen-hui charged. Instead, the Northern line is saying that our ordinary ways of conceptualizing the world impose an epistemic grid upon what-is which is inappropriate, and because of this fundamental mismatch between our expectations and what really is, we generate duḥkha and evil karma. The text began by stating that Awakening is awakening

from wrong thinking, and then the adjective "wrong" is omitted in subsequent discussion because it is clearly understood in context. Consequently, it seems justified to conclude that the central Northern Ch'an phrase, that "Awakening is the mind itself which is free from (li) thinking," does not support the conclusion that Northern Ch'an held a dualistic view of the mind, or even a dualistic understanding of the use of li in this context.

Although li nien, or "being free from thinking," is one of the most important appearances of li in the Northern texts, it is by no means the only way li is used. Perhaps in one or more of its other appearances li is clearly dualistic and so supports the claims of Ho-tsê Shen-hui and Suzuki. In particular, the following are some typical instances of the use of li in the writings of the Northern Ch'an masters:

1. If one is li mind, craving does not arise.
   If one is li forms, anger does not arise.
   If one is li both forms and mind, folly and ignorance are not manifested.
   If one is li mind, one transcends the realm of desire.
   If one is li forms, one transcends the realm of forms.
   If one is li both, one transcends the formless realm.[100]

2. The Bodhisattva is li the defilements of desire, anger, and false views.[101]

3. When the mind is li attachments, the mind attains liberation.
   When form is li attachments, forms attain liberation.[102]

4. Not to bring forth the mind of conceptualization and description is to be li attachments and fetters, and is the achievement of liberation.[103]

5. Obtaining li arrogance, arrogance does not arise.[104]

6. Being li mind, names do not appear
Being li forms, characteristics do not arise.[105]

The above list is not exhaustive, but it is generally comprehensive in that significant appearances of li tend to follow the same format, with minor variations, throughout the literature of Northern Ch'an. In most of these, and the other examples quoted on pages 110 and 111, we can substitute "apart from" or "separated from" for li and it does give good sense to the statement -- however, this would seem to support the claim that Northern Ch'an uses li dualistically. For example, the second sense of li (that the object of li became non-existent) is fully supported by quotation (5) which says that when one has attained 'li arrogance,' then arrogance does not arise. But, there are other interpretations for li which provide good sense in the quotations without the dualistic implications.

The most comprehensive possibility for li is the fourth sense distinguished, i.e. li implies an attitude of mental detachment taken towards the object. This meaning would not have any dualistic consequences, yet would account for the same statements quoted above. One difficulty that might be suggested with this interpretation is that, in some of the quotations, this li would seem to be too weak. For example, (2), "The Bodhisattva is li the defilements of desire, anger,

and false views," becomes: "The Bodhisattva has an attitude of mental detachment towards the defilements." This could be interpreted as implying that defilements remain in the Bodhisattva, but he or she simply is not attached to the desires, anger, and false views which are still active in the Bodhisattva. Generally, however, the Bodhisattva (who is on one of the higher bhūmi) is one who has eliminated all false views, etc.

This conflict is more apparent than real, for there are at least two ways of analyzing this claim which does not commit us to the further implication that the Bodhisattva has false views, although he or she remains detached from such false views. The first analysis involves the understanding of the nature of language on the part of the Bodhisattva. The second analysis shows that the attitude of detachment results in the ultimate elimination of false views.

According to the Mahayana, language tends to generate false views by leading the speaker to assume that there are self-existent realities which correspond to the terms utilized. However, the Bodhisattva is someone who is able to manipulate language (or false views) without falling into the picture-view of language. The Bodhisattva does not make the common mistake of taking all terms of language as standing in a one-to-one relationship with objects in the world. In this view, language maps a world (in a one-to-one manner) which is composed of self-existent things (the naive realist view), or which is composed of self-existent ultimate 'bits,' or dharmas (the view

ascribed to the Abhidharma schools by the Mahayana). Here, it seems entirely correct to say that the Bodhisattva is detached from false views (which are language-connected). The Bodhisattva can use terms like "I" or "self" without making the natural and mistaken inference to the existence of an ātman, or "soul" which remains unchanging throughout one's life (and throughout the life cycles created by karma). The Bodhisattva can utilize language forms without the language forms creating a metaphysical view of a static universe, rather than the world which is in constant flux, wherein all distinctions belong only to the 'mundane truth' and not to the ultimate nature of what-is, which can only be described as Suchness (Tathatā). Being free from false views, it would seem that the attitude of mental detachment which the Bodhisattva cultivates, frees the Bodhisattva from language-bondage. Being free from language-bondage, the Bodhisattva thinks and speaks without the mistaken belief that the world is composed of self-existent things (which can be possessed, desired, rejected, etc.), and this would seem to be equivalent to seeing the world as śūnyatā. If li is understood as an attitude of mental detachment, it would seem to avoid all dualisms and also be strong enough to account for cases such as the Bodhisattva who is "free from all defilements."

There is another interpretation of li as "an attitude of mental detachment" which also avoids the difficulty that false views remain when the Bodhisattva is detached from all false

views. One can argue that by taking an attitude of mental non-attachment towards defilements, such as the Three Poisons, these destructive states are indirectly and gradually eliminated. Understood in this way, _li_, or the attitude of non-attachment, is a process which ultimately results in the total removal of these elements which are characteristic of "wrong thinking." One begins by cultivating an attitude of non-attachment, and then begins to think in a detached manner; as a result, craving does not arise, anger does not arise (gradually becomes weaker and weaker), and false views are finally no longer manifested.

All of the above quotations involving _li_ can be interpreted quite satisfactorily using the translation of "non-attachment" for _li_, except for one. The only statement which does not work well is (3), which becomes "when the mind is non-attached to (_li_) its attachments, ..." However, if we simply use the ordinary common dictionary definition of _li_ as "apart from," the line makes perfect sense and still does not commit us to any kind of ultimate dualism. To be apart from attachments seems equivalent to saying that no attachments are present. This is not dualistic because attachments are not static entities, or "things," which one separates oneself from; attachments are dispositions which are modified as one cultivates an attitude of non-attachment.

In conclusion, we have analyzed the appearances of li in the writings of Northern Ch'an to see if there is any dualistic stance being adopted, either implicitly or explicitly. We first argued that "being free from thinking" (li nien) is not properly understood unless one realizes that nien is actually an abbreviation for wang nien, or "wrong thinking." With this clear, the claim that Northern Ch'an advocated the forceful suppression of thinking and the maintenance of a blank mind, is shown to be a misinterpretation, probably based upon two errors: (a) taking nien as a reference to all mental activity; (b) taking li as a forceful mental act of suppression of the arising of thoughts.

The remaining appearances of li were analyzed, and shown to be understandable in several different ways. However, understanding li as "an attitude of mental detachment" was shown to provide a non-dual interpretation of the various phrases in question, with one exception. Even in the case where this interpretation did not seem fully adequate, we argued that the common understanding of li (as "separation") has no dualistic consequences in Northern philosophy. Although the term "separation" sounds as though it would have dualistic consequences, when placed in the context where li is used, we can see that no dualism is being advocated.

We have not conclusively demonstrated that li cannot possibly be understood in a dualistic manner. Rather, we have argued that the various appearances of li need not be

interpreted dualistically. This does not establish that non-dualistic interpretations of *li* are the only proper way of rendering the original meaning in the minds of the authors of the Northern Ch'an texts.

Although a non-dualist interpretation of *li* cannot be conclusively demonstrated, we can produce additional confirming evidence which lends support for such a non-dual position. We have already examined numerous pairs in the thought of Northern Ch'an, and demonstrated that none are advocating an ultimate dualism. In the absence of any other demonstrated dualism in Northern Ch'an philosophy, the claim that *li* is further evidence of a dualistic tendency in Northern Ch'an is weakened considerably. When none of the other allegedly dualistic pairs can be demonstrated to be dualistic, we would not have any compelling reason to opt for a dualistic *li* in preference to non-dualistic interpretations of *li*. If anything, the total context of Northern Ch'an thought would suggest that the most consistent view would be one which takes *li* in a non-dualistic way.

The Relationship of Concentration and Insight

The last objection was that any teaching which claims that the practice of concentration (*ting* 定) leads to insight holds that these are two different things, and hence is

ultimately dualistic. Hui-neng says that "to hold this view implies that things have duality. . . ."[106] Ho-tsê Shen-hui says, "when concentration and insight are the same, this is called 'seeing into the Buddha-nature'."[107] For the Southern line, concentration and insight were related as substance (t'i) and function (yung), which certainly implies that it is not the case that the practice of the function can cause, or bring about its own substance. In addition, Ho-tsê Shen-hui also explicitly states, "When mind and objective conditions both vanish, substance and function are identical."[108]

On the other hand, the Northern texts make it very clear that a basic teaching was, "following upon concentration, awaken prajñā." (從定發慧).[109] The question here is: does this entail an ultimate dualism in Northern Ch'an philosophy?

There are several possible ways of responding to this. The first is to point out that this is a traditional way of understanding the Buddhist path. From the level of the worldly truth, where one speaks about doctrine and methods of cultivation leading to enlightenment, this progression of cultivation of concentration which leads to insight is accepted in Buddhism, whether the earlier forms, or the Mahayana developments.

The second response to this is to note that unless one is resolute in avoiding all ordinary (i.e. non-ultimate) modes of speech, this is precisely the way even the Southern line spoke. The most obvious example is found in the great Ch'an master

Hui-hai, who was influenced by Ho-tsê Shen-hui, and whose writings seem closest in spirit to those of Shen-hui.[110] In one of the dialogues taken from Ta-chu Hai-hai's Tun-wu yao-men, we find the following:

> A monk asked:
> What is the doctrine of the identity of concentration and insight?
> The master replied:
> Concentration is substance (t'i), and insight is its function (yung). Following upon concentration there is the awakening of insight,[111] and following insight there is a return to concentration.[112]

Hui-hai has used almost the identical phrase that the Northern line used. This does not demonstrate that such a way of expressing oneself is not dualistic, but it does show that people who hold resolutely to a non-dualistic view can still speak in the same terms which the Northern line utilized. Even the famous contemporary Japanese Zen master of the Rinzai line, Kosen Imakita (1826-1892) says, "from Dhyana, bring out Prajna."[113]

This difference, as with so many others which we have encountered, seems to amount to a conflict over levels of speech. When something is said on the level of the worldly truth, it becomes false from the level of the non-dual ultimate truth. In this case, as with so many of the others, the Northern line seems content to utilize terms and descriptions which are unobjectionable on the lower level, and it does not seem too concerned with immediately countering the

assertions with some kind of a caveat, such as is found so often in the writings of the Southern line. In fact, in the next chapter we shall suggest that this difference is one of the most interesting differences between the writings of the two lines.

Conclusions

Following an investigation of the numerous alleged dualisms in the philosophy of the Northern line of Ch'an, it has been demonstrated that in most cases, no dualism is implied, and in the cases where a non-dualistic interpretation could not be conclusively established, nevertheless, there are non-dualistic interpretations available.

We have not yet considered the suppressed theses which the Southern line may have maintained, and which, if true, would seem to provide some justification for the severe criticisms which it offered of the Northern line of Ch'an. We shall discuss these now. The implied objections were:

(1) Northern Ch'an philosophy cannot allow for a genuine turning-over of the dualistic conceptual structure, which is necessary for the attainment of non-dual insight.

Reply: This objection seems resolvable by non-philosophic means. If any person in the Northern

line achieved non-dual insight, then claim (1) would be shown to be incorrect. In fact, Ho-tsê Shen-hui recognized that Shen-hsiu, of the North, was fully enlightened when he said, ". . . Ch'an master Hung-jen did not transmit the mandate to master Shen-hsiu, although later he did attain the fruit of the Way (Tao)."[114]

A weaker version of claim (1) could be adopted, i.e., that the Northern Ch'an method is more difficult to use to achieve non-dual insight. This would then become a question about the relative efficacy of methods of spiritual cultivation, and this does not seem resolvable by any method of philosophic analysis.

(2) Northern Ch'an philosophy does not recognize that all dualistic conceptual schemes lack ultimacy.

Reply: The Ta-ch'eng pei-tsung lun demonstrated very clearly that the Northern line did not hold that the pairs, such as purity, impurity, Nirvana, samsara, etc., had any ultimacy.[115]

(3) Northern Ch'an methods of cultivation advocate a reversal of direction (from impurity to purity), but this is not transcending all dualisms, which is required for the

genuine attainment of non-dualistic insight.

Reply: It has been shown that the purity advocated by Northern Ch'an is not the cleanliness (purity) achieved by washing away dirt (impurity). Northern Ch'an advocated achieving awareness of the mind which is free from the activity of wrong thinking. Defilement, or impurity, is merely the way the world appears to someone who utilizes the epistemic grid of wang nien, or "wrong thinking." To eliminate impurity is not to clean up the world, but instead it is to eliminate incorrect and misleading ways of understanding the world. Purity is the world when perceived without the grid of wrong thinking. In addition, we quoted from several Northern Ch'an texts which demonstrated that the distinction between purity and impurity is useful only in the mundane realm, and both opposites are dropped in the realm of the higher truth. Claim (3) is thus demonstrated to be incorrect.

(4) Practices based upon a dualistic structure cannot be effective for liberating one from dualism, and thus cannot be effective for bringing one to non-dual insight.

Reply: This is simply another variant on objections previously discussed. If this claim is true, two things must be the case: (a) Northern Ch'an theory

and practice must be based upon a dualistic structure; (b) Northern Ch'an methods cannot be effective in bringing about non-dual insight. The first claim has already been shown to be incorrect. The second claim once again brings into question the actual efficacy of Northern Ch'an methods of spiritual cultivation, and this is not an issue which can be decided by philosophic analysis.

The final conclusion of this chapter is that the philosophy of Northern Ch'an, when considered in its totality, does not demonstrate reliance upon a fundamentally dualistic foundation. The authors of the texts of the Northern line clearly state that the ultimate truth is non-dual, and they show awareness of the fact that discussions which utilize conceptual pairs run the risk of being mistaken for ultimates. They deny that these conceptual pairs apply when one is dealing with ultimate truth.

However, the writings of the Northern line are rather different in character when compared to those of the Southern line, especially the writings of Ho-tsê Shen-hui, and the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. These differences seem related to the utilization of different levels of speech, commonly called the doctrine of Two Truths. In the next

chapter, we shall summarize our findings, and attempt to account for the division of Ch'an into the two lines of North and South, but based upon grounds other than the ones suggested in the previous chapters.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Blofeld, Zen Teachings of Huang Po, Grove Press, 1958 (a footnote on page 117).

2. Yampolsky, Platform Sutra, p. 130. At least one scholar of Northern Ch'an, John McRae, considers this poem to be a fairly accurate summation of Northern Ch'an ideas. However, at this stage of our analysis, we are not particularly concerned with whether the poem is accurate or not. Here, we are dealing with the criticisms offered by the Southern line of Ch'an.

3. Ibid., p. 131. This kind of remark is typical in Ch'an and Zen writings. Even contemporary Japanese Zen masters tend to say the same thing. For example, in the 1930's, the Zen master Sokei-an wrote, "Shen-hsiu's attitude was good, but it was not true Buddhism" (Zen Notes, vol. XXII, no. 6, June 1975, p. 7). The contemporary Zen master, Shibayama Zenkei, makes the same point as follows:

> Seeing it [Shen-hsiu's poem], Eno [Hui-neng] thought that it was a good poem beautifully expressed, but that it was not quite penetrating yet. He made a poem to express his own spirituality and also wrote it on the wall. . . . Monk Shinshu's poem may be excellent, yet it remains ethical and does not go beyond a static religious view. On the other hand, Brother Eno's poem is transcendental and penetrating and reflects a dynamic religious view of a higher order. Where these two poems are concerned, there is definitely a great difference in the Zen ability of Shinshu and Eno. (Shibayama, Zen Comments on the Mumonkan, Harper & Row, 1974, p. 169).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., pp. 135-6. Yampolsky indicates that this criticism is directed against a specific Northern Ch'an master named Ch'eng.

6. Hu Shih, Shen-hui ho-shang i-chi, p. 138; the quotation is Suzuki's from his Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, p. 48.

7. Yampolsky, ibid., p. 84.

8. Hu Shih, ibid., p. 152.

9. Yanagida, Dango no taishō hyō, p. 19.

10. It is important to recall that, in the Ch'an tradition, Shen-hsiu's poem was assigned to test his depth and degree of understanding, and it was supposed to reveal his complete insight; it was not assigned merely as an exercise in producing good advice to beginners in Ch'an.

11. Blofeld, Huang Po, p. 64; Chinese text plus Japanese commentary in Iriya, Denshin hōyō, p. 85.

12. Yampolsky, ibid., pp. 170-71.

13. Chih-hai, Liu-tzu t'an-ching chu-chiai, Taiwan, 1962, p. 12B.

14. Suzuki, Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū, vol. III, p. 28.

15. Suzuki, Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, p. 23.

16. Ibid., p. 37.

17. Blofeld, ibid., p. 110. An equally clear statement of the same point was quoted on the first page of this chapter.

18. Charles Luk, Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Third Series, p. 67.

19. There are many contemporary people who adopt this same view, ranging from the Zen sermons of Sokei-an roshi, delivered in Japanese in the 1930's (most of which have been collected, translated, and published in Zen Notes, especially volume XXII, no. 4-8), to the recent remarks of Zentatsu Baker-roshi (in Wind Bell, vol. XV, no. 1, pp. 10-17).

20. I.e., Hui-neng, Ho-tsê Shen-hui, Huang-po, and Tsung-mi.

21. Yampolsky, ibid., p. 136.

22. Suzuki, Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, p. 25; italics mine.

23. Suzuki, Zenshū, vol. III, p. 145.

24. Suzuki, Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, pp. 25-6.

25. Ibid., p. 33; emphasis mine.

26. E.g., Yampolsky, ibid., section 13, pp. 135-6. Yampolsky comments that "the identity of prajñā and meditation . . . is described as basic to Hui-neng's teaching" (p. 115).

27. Ibid., p. 84.

28. Suzuki, Zenshū, vol. III, p. 146.

29. Ibid.

30. Suzuki, Zen Doctrine of No-Mind, p. 33.

31. Ibid., p. 25.

32. Suzuki, Zenshū, vol. III, p. 145.

33. T 48(2016)943a.

34. Ta-ch'eng wu fang-pien pei-tsung, in Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, vol. I, p. 492. Same passage is also found in Suzuki, Zenshū, vol. III, p. 228.

35. Ui, ibid., p. 489; Suzuki, ibid., p. 228.

36. Hu Shih, ibid., pp. 287-88.

37. Discussed previously on pages 83-4 of this dissertation, and in footnote 3 on page 140.

38. The issue is obviously much more involved than suggested above, for we have to ask, "recognized as enlightened by whom"? The question of how to recognize someone as being enlightened is extremely interesting, but is not relevant to the main dissertation and so cannot be pursued here. An interesting discussion of the topic, from a Wittgensteinian point of view, can be found in the unpublished dissertation of Dr. Ronald Burr, Zen, Ontology, and Human Action, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1975.

39. For the reasons mentioned earlier, this objection is not amenable to philosophic analysis and consequently will not be pursued.

40. P'o-hsiang lun (a variant of the Kuan-hsin lun), T 48 (2009)367a. Shen-hsiu's analysis is clearly indebted to the Ch'i-hsin lun (Awakening of Faith). A passage from this basic Northern Ch'an text shows a similar

analysis of mind into two aspects:

> One is the aspect of Mind in terms of the Absolute (tathatā, Suchness), and the other is the aspect of mind in terms of phenomena (saṁsāra, birth and death). Each of these two aspects embraces all states of existence (Hakeda, The Awakening of Faith, 1967, p. 31; Chinese text: T 32(1666)576a).

41. T 48(2009)367a.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p. 1271a; italics mine.

44. Li will be discussed at much greater length later in this chapter, when the claim that li is dualistic is considered.

45. T 85(2839)1292b.

46. T 85(2834)1273; also Ui, Zenshūshi kenkyū, vol. I, p. 451.

47. This interpretation of the pure mind as a sort of an "ultimate consciousness" is also seen in some contemporary psychological writings: ". . . a supra-sensory, supra-rational region of mind, whose existence has been known since antiquity. . . . It has many levels, but its ultimate manifestation--when the mind becomes dismantled of all objective form and content--is a state of consciousness far more pure and fundamental and absolute than ordinary consciousness or even the unconscious." (Stanley R. Dean, "Beyond the unconscious: the Ultra-conscious," Psychologia, Vol. VIII [1965], p. 145).

48. T 85(2834)1273; also Ui, ibid., p. 460.

49. Ibid.

50. Hu Shih, ibid., p. 152.

51. Ch'uan-teng lu, T 51(2076)231b24.

52. Ui, ibid., p. 469.

53. Ibid., p. 470.

54. The Taishō text repeats "liberation" in both lines. Following the suggestion of Ui Hakuju, the second has been corrected to read "bondage."

55. T 85(2836)1281c17-29.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 1282a11-13.

57. Ui, *ibid.*, p. 470.

58. Ch'ao-chou Ta-tien, T 51(2076)313a12-20.

59. Charles Luk, *The Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra*, p. 31.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

61. T 85(2836)1281c.

62. Hu, *ibid.*, p. 152.

63. Suzuki, *Zen Doctrine of No-Mind*, pp. 25-6.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

65. T 85(2834)1273c4.

66. This does recall the famous verse, "from the beginning, not a single thing" (*pen-lai wu i wu* 本來無一物).

67. Ui, *ibid.*, p. 469.

68. This aspect of the North-South disagreement will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

69. *Ta-ch'eng wu-sheng fang-pien men*, T 85(2834)1273c12.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 1274a23.

71. This is another place which recalls Shen-hsiu's poem referring to the body being the Bodhi-tree.

72. Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, vol. I, p. 469.

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.*, p. 470.

75. T 85(2839)1294b4.

76. T 85(2839)1292b.

77. T 85(2834)1274b.

78. T 85(2839)1291c-92a; corrected text in Ui, ibid., p. 511.

79. Ibid., p. 1292b; Ui, ibid., p. 512. There are short explanatory remarks following each sentence, printed using smaller, half-size Chinese characters as a sort of footnote. These have been omitted.

80. T 85(2836)1281c27.

81. Yanagida, ibid., p. 17; for the yü-lu reference, see Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū, Vol. III, p. 277.

82. T 14(475)542c.

83. Ibid., p. 548b.

84. Ibid., p. 539c.

85. T 25(1509)417c.

86. Quoted in Morohashi, Bukkyō daijiten, p. 4704c.

87. Kenneth Inada, Nāgārjuna: Mūlamadhyamikakārikā, p. 158.

88. T 85(2834)1274b; Ui, ibid., pp. 452-3.

89. Stein 2058, in Ui, ibid., p. 470.

90. This seems to be almost a paraphrase of Fa-tsang's Hua-yen i-hai po-men, T 45(1875)631a4-9.

91. Ui, ibid., p. 470.

92. C. C. Chang discusses these two aspects of mind in his The Practice of Zen, pp. 24-31. The yung aspect of mind is the active layer of mind, including all eight vijñānas; the t'i, or essence, of mind is the innermost core, what Chang calls the "illuminating-void suchness" (p. 28).

93. Once again we might note that the Northern texts do not share the directness found in the writings of the Southern line. Ho-tsê Shen-hui simply asserts, "t'i and yung are identical," in his Hsien tsung chi, found at T 51(2076)245a.

94. Cf. Nakamura Hajime, Bukkyōgo daijiten, pp. 1415a-b; Soothill, Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, p. 475; Mathews, Chinese-English Dictionary, entry 3902. That the idea of "separation" as a separation between two

different things, was associated with the term even in ancient times can be seen by noticing that there is a related homophone, li 籬, which, by adding the radical for 'bamboo' above the character, generates the character which means a bamboo fence (e.g. Mathews, ibid., entry 3903).

95. For example, Nelson, Japanese-English Character Dictionary, entry 5040; Kenkyusha, New Japanese-English Dictionary, p. 382.

96. D. T. Suzuki, Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū, vol. III, p. 145.

97. T 85(2834)1273c22.

98. The statement is by Ho-tsê Shen-hui, and can be found in Hu Shih, ibid., p. 288 (emphasis mine).

99. Ta-ch'eng wu-fang-pien pei-tsung, in Suzuki, Zenshū, III, p. 191.

100. T 85(2839)1292b4.

101. T 85(2834)1276a2.

102. T 85(2834)1277a25.

103. Ibid., p. 1277b19.

104. Ibid., p. 1276c2.

105. T 85(2839)1292b16.

106. Yampolsky, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, pp. 135-6.

107. Hu Shih, Shen-hui ho-shang i-chi, p. 138.

108. T 51(2076)245a.

109. Ui, ibid., p. 471. See also T 85(2834)1274b.

110. The influence of Ho-tsê Shen-hui upon Ta-chu Hui-hai, who was an important disciple of Ma-tsu Tao-i (709-788), has been noted by several scholars. For example, in his introduction to a Japanese translation of Hui-hai's Chinese text, S. Hirano writes, "In terms of reasoning and arguments, the influence of Ho-tsê Shen-hui [upon Hui-hai] is very strong" (S. Hirano, Tongo yōmon, Tokyo, 1970, p. 2).

111. This is almost identical to the phrase found in the writings of Northern Ch'an; only the third character is different.

112. Hirano, Tongo yōmon, p. 206. The same passage is translated into English by John Blofeld: "Dhyāna begets wisdom and wisdom leads to dhyāna" (Blofeld, Zen Teaching of Hui Hai, p. 128).

113. From Seikan Hasegawa, The Cave of Poison Grass, 1975, p. 106.

114. Hu Shih, ibid., p. 283.

115. T 85(2836)1281c-1282a. This is the same text which we previously quoted, and which had such phrases as:
I do not even give rise to the mind of purity;
How much less to a mind of impurity.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

> Many people think the stanza of Jinshu [Shen-hsiu] is not yet showing the enlightened world, and that Eno's [Hui-neng's] is better. But I don't think so. Both are expressing the same thing, but from opposite sides. . . . In historical fact, the Fifth Patriarch transmitted the Dharma to both Jinshu and Eno.[1]

Summary

This dissertation began with the isolation of four criticisms of the Northern line of Ch'an Buddhism. They were:

1. Northern Ch'an allegedly taught a quietist form of meditation.
2. Northern Ch'an allegedly advocated gradual enlightenment.
3. Northern Ch'an allegedly was dualistic in its

theoretical formulation of the Buddhist doctrine, and dualistic in its description of the Buddhist path of cultivation and training.

4. Shen-hsiu, the founder of the Northern line of Ch'an, allegedly did not receive the official dharma-succession from the Fifth Patriarch.[2]

It was noted that the traditional understanding of the Northern line was the one found in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, which was a portrayal which was neither sympathetic nor accurate. Later Ch'an writings essentially ignored the insights and forms of expression typical of the Northern line. However, utilizing original Northern Ch'an texts dating from the eighth century, discovered in the caves of Tun-huang, it is possible to analyze the criticisms of the Northern line and attempt to ascertain whether or not they were accurate.

Concerning the issue of quietism, it was clear that the followers of Northern Ch'an practiced cross-legged meditation and stressed exercises related to mental cultivation, but the Northern Ch'an texts very clearly attacked all quietistic interpretations of meditation. Monks who practiced introverted meditation, in the sense of closing off incoming stimulii and abiding in a mental blankness, were condemned, and such a state was called "false concentration." It was concluded that

the objections related to the issue of quietism were incorrect. However, it did appear that the meditation techniques advocated by the North may have differed significantly from the practices of the South, but exactly how and why is not clear from any of the available texts.[3]

Concerning the second criticism, it was demonstrated that the Northern line of Ch'an did not advocate gradual enlightenment, but probably did advocate exercises which gradually led to an experience of sudden illumination. Although the North did recognize sudden enlightenment, it did not emphasize this; rather the emphasis was upon the path, the methods, and the techniques which could lead the monk to enlightenment.

The most philosophically significant issue seems to have been the issue of dualism. After an analysis of the various points which were claimed to demonstrate a dualistic bias, it was shown that in most of the cases, there was no dualism present or intended. In the case where the non-dualist interpretation could not be conclusively demonstrated, it was established that there were non-dualist interpretations available which were entirely consistent with the rest of the Northern Ch'an writings. Although the Northern school used numerous philosophical discriminations, most typically involving pairs of concepts, it was concluded that there were no compelling reasons to give a dualistic interpretation to the philosophy of the Northern line of Ch'an Buddhism.

Conclusions

Although the Northern line of Ch'an was not guilty of the charges, in the forms as traditionally interpreted, there were some very interesting and significant differences between the two lines. These differences have been indicated in the previous chapters, but were not fully discussed at that time. This seems to be the appropriate place for such differences to be elucidated.

The first general remark which can be made concerning the differences between the two lines of Ch'an, as reflected in their respective writings, is that the two lines emphasized different aspects of the Buddhist teachings. The Southern line placed almost exclusive emphasis upon "seeing," which seems to be an emphasis upon prajñā, with a corresponding deemphasis of meditation and concentration practices. On the other hand, the North stressed meditation practices and associated ideas such as the gradual purification of the mind by eliminating kleśa in some sort of consecutive manner. With its emphasis upon non-dual insight which happens all at once, the South criticized the structure of gradual practice practiced in the North. Also, the Southern doctrine relates prajñā and meditation as essence and function of the enlightened mind. Thus, it would be an error to claim that meditation can create prajñā, for this is equivalent to the claim that the function

of mind creates its own essence. Clearly they must both be simultaneous. Although this is true from the level of the highest truth (paramārtha-satya), it is equally true that proficiency in mental cultivation lays essential groundwork for the blossoming of prajñā, according to the worldly, or mundane standpoint (saṁvṛti-satya).

This leads to the second, and perhaps the major difference between the two lines. Related to the issue of paramārtha and saṁvṛti is the question about just what can be properly said at all about what-is. It seems that the range and limits of the speakable are drawn considerably differently in the two Ch'an lines. In the Southern writings, we can see the attempts of the masters to avoid speaking in ways which might be misleading, and this apparently included attempts to avoid speaking from the mundane standpoint very often. The most obvious methods for doing this are the common appearances of denial, contradiction, and paradox in the writings of the Ch'an masters of the Southern line. This is inspired by the paradoxical approach found in the Prajñāpāramitā literature (especially the Vajracchedikā, or "Diamond Sutra", a text upon which both Hui-neng and Ho-tsê Shen-hui relied very strongly). On the other hand, the authors of the Northern line texts seem to have been more influenced by the approach found in such texts as the Laṅkavatāra sūtra and the Awakening of Faith, where the paradoxicality is considerably less evident. These texts are

not as concerned with speaking consistently from the level of the highest truth, and so there is a much greater reliance upon the worldly truth to express the insights of Mahayana Buddhism. As it was noticed, the Northern line of Ch'an was not very much concerned with insuring that all of its pronouncements were on this highest level, and apparently felt little hesitation in speaking about Buddhism in a way which recognized relative truth as a valid means for speaking about enlightenment. However, the Northern line did recognize that the saṁvṛti-satya level was dualistic and untrue when seen from the point of view of the final goal--Awakening.

This difference can be seen to have been responsible for much of the conflict between the two lines. The Northern line speaks about Buddhism from the point of view of the path, the methods and techniques which lead to Awakening; the Southern line generally attempted to speak from the point of view of the goal, the enlightened point of view. And, in this kind of conflict, the worldly point of view is always overruled by the highest point of view; consequently the Northern texts can give the appearance of being philosophically inferior and indefensible when contrasted with the Southern texts of the same period, which tried to maintain a consistent paramārtha-satya level in their writings.

Nevertheless, as this dissertation has demonstrated, the contrast is not as severe as it appears in the abstract,

because the Northern line's doctrines can be shown in a very positive light when seen from another point of view. Instead of stressing prajñā to people who are in no position to understand it, the Northern line stressed upāya, and thus demonstrated a truly compassionate desire to free the seeker of the Way, who is fettered by ignorance, craving, evil karma, and who lives in the period of the decay of the dharma (mo-fa). How could such a person begin to comprehend the truth when it is spoken from the highest level? From this standpoint, the Northern line appears compassionate and understanding when compared with the Southern line, and their more difficult approach. The words of the writings of the Southern Ch'an masters can only be paradox and nonsense to the unenlightened, whereas the Northern line's writings are clear, easy to understand from the level of the worldly truth, and lead step by step to a plateau from which one can realize Awakening in an instant. The absolute truth of the Southern line cannot be grasped at all by resorting to any logical processes--it is like the proverbial "mosquito trying to bit an iron ball." In fact, to remain on the absolute level is to eliminate any chance of genuine communication, except with those who are ready. The Ch'an master Ching-ts'en of Chang-sha said, "If I were to demonstrate the truth of Zen in its absolute aspect, the front court of my monastery would see weeds growing rampant."[4] The Northern Ch'an approach

seems to have been a valiant attempt to make the Buddhist path accessible to the ordinary person by avoiding the kinds of confusion created by adopting the absolute level of speech in its writings and dialogues all the time.

As previously indicated, one Southern Ch'an method of speaking from the highest level is its use of negation. This implies that the absolute truth is achieved by negating the worldly truth. This is the leap of the paradox, the non-dual leap which attempts to transcend the dichotomy of 'A' and 'not-A' simultaneously. The view of the Northern line seems to have been somewhat different. Instead of seeing paramārtha-satya as the negation of saṃvṛti-satya, the Northern texts imply that Northern Ch'an masters felt a certain continuity in the path from the worldly level to the highest level. Not only does the mundane truth serve as a means to get to the highest level, but upāya as used by the Northern line, suggests that one might be able to make a smooth transition as one moves along the path until one achieves the instantaneous realization of paramārtha-satya. In order to illustrate the differences which it is suggested might exist between the two lines, consider a question addressed to two hypothetical followers of the two traditions. To the question "Can the absolute truth be expressed in words?" the Northern monk might reply, "Yes--by means of the worldly truth." To the same question, a follower of the Southern tradition might

reply, "Yes--by the denial of the worldly truth."

If this is an accurate portrayal of the respective ideas of the two lines, it provides another way of understanding the nature of the division of Ch'an into the North and South. It might also account for the surprising vehemence of the Southern attack upon the doctrines of the Northern line. From the standpoint of paramārtha-satya, the Northern teachings utilize which might be characterized as illusion and untruth, which can be countered by denying what it says. From the Southern point of view, worldly truth does not co-exist with the ultimate truth; it is not even contiguous with the ultimate, nor does it gradually lead one to the ultimate level. Insight comes from dropping the use of the mundane and leaping beyond this ultimately false way of seeing and understanding.

However, from the Northern point of view, saṁvṛti is essentially involved in the Buddhist way; it leads to provisional understanding and is the way to utilize upāya. Although the worldly truth is recognized as being ultimately untrue, it is still a fruitful fiction which can lead one to an understanding where untruth is left behind. However, we are not suggesting that upāya was emphasized only (or mainly) in the Northern line of Ch'an. Throughout the history of the development of the Southern tradition of Ch'an, it is clear that upāya was utilized and eventually developed into a very high art; however, it was not developed along the lines used

by the Northern line of Ch'an. Rather, in the South, upāya tended to be associated with non-verbal means for bringing a monk to enlightenment. These would include striking, pushing, the twisting of a nose, blowing out a candle, etc., or verbal means which do not make use of the conventional level of speech, such as the paradoxical k'ung-an (koan in Japanese), shouting, the use of nonsense syllables in reply to questions, and giving other kinds of replies which were simply incomprehensible to one utilizing the kind of reasoning available to one on the saṁvṛti level of speech.

The three objections to the Northern line have been shown to have been incorrect, but they can be understood in the light of the above remarks. As was stated previously, the Northern line of Ch'an apparently emphasized preparatory stages, it emphasized meditation methods, it utilized mundane levels of speech as upāya, it was compassionately aware of the difficulties of the monks who lived in this period of the decay of the dharma, and the Northern line generally discussed the Buddha path from the point of view of the person walking the path. The Southern writings emphasize the ultimate goal, emphasize non-dual insight, or 'seeing' (as "seeing one's own true nature"); they reject the mundane level of speech and prefer to speak paradoxically, it apparently did not pay much attention to the doctrine of mo-fa (decay of the dharma), and generally

the writings seem to show a preference for discussing the Buddha way from the point of view of the summit of the path. These differences seem to be able to account for the three objections which the Southern line raised against the North.

In the first case, the North emphasized meditation and cultivation, and the Southern line apparently did not place so much emphasis upon these. The Southern masters seem to have been very sensitive about potential misunderstandings of the role of meditation and concentration, and the ultimate value to the states which a skilled practitioner could achieve. These masters apparently felt strongly that enlightenment came only by seeing with the "prajñā-eye," and consequently, they attacked those whom they perceived as overemphasizing cultivation at the expense of the intuitive insight of prajñā.

The second objection reflects the difference in emphasis upon the path and techniques of spiritual cultivation. When the Northern line places its emphasis upon the path leading to Awakening, this will give the appearance of being a gradual process of step-by-step progress when contrasted with the rhetoric of the Southern line. Southern texts stress the sudden seeing into one's true nature, and minimize the gradual refinement which follows. And, it is precisely because the Southern texts rarely speak of either preparatory stages, or of gradual refinement following the initial sudden enlightenment experience, the contrast appears even stronger than it is.

The third objection, involving dualism, also seems to be accounted for by the differences which were previously indicated. To the extent that saṁvṛti-satya is employed in discourse and in writings, to that extent the doctrines and teachings can be made to appear untrue and dualistic when contrasted with the paramārtha approach. To say something in coherent, well-reasoned propositions and statements, or to comment upon the Buddhist texts in a rational and intellectual manner, is to be involved in dualisms. Certainly there are ways of avoiding the appearance of dualism, but each of these ways seem to be only at the expense of communication with those one wants to communicate with--those who are not yet enlightened. One can be silent, one can gesture and gesticulate, one can say things like "Yes-and-no," one can deny what one has just said, or say something which blatently contradicts what one has already said, or one can shout or utter apparently meaningless sounds. All of the above techniques were utilized by Southern Ch'an masters. When contrasted with these, the writings of the Northern line will certainly give the appearance of being dualistic. The Southern line's writings, one the other hand, will not.

In conclusion, it has been argued that the nature of the dispute between the two lines of Ch'an Buddhism in eighth century China was not as has been perceived by the majority of

commentators. There were significant differences between the two lines of Ch'an Buddhism, and it was the difference of opinion on the best way of speaking about, and conveying the experience of Awakening which was responsible for the initial division of Ch'an into the two lines, and then the rivalry which developed in the subsequent hundred years following this initial division. Although it was the approach of the Southern line of Ch'an which was generally adopted by the majority of later Ch'an and Zen teachers, it was not because Northern Ch'an taught bad Buddhism, or because its doctrinal understanding was deficient. Northern Ch'an may have lost the battle speaking historically, but did not lose the battle for philosophical reasons.[6]

FOOTNOTES

1. Seikan Hasegawa Roshi, The Cave of Poison Grass, Companions of Zen Training, Great Ocean Publishers, Arlington, Virginia, 1975, pp. 116-17.

2. As was noted in the first chapter, this fourth objection is not open to philosophical analysis, and consequently was not pursued further.

3. Part of the difficulty with this issue is that we have almost no information at all about the meditation practice (or lack of) in the early period of Southern Ch'an, which is Hui-neng and Shen-hui. It is obvious that the emphasis in both is upon 'seeing' (chien 見), but just how one goes about attempting to 'see' is not all that clear. From the texts, one gets the impression that one simply does it, and that is all. Yet the Southern masters may well have felt that this kind of non-dualistic seeing could be achieved with the aid of meditation practices.

4. Quoted in D. T. Suzuki, Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series, Rider & Co., p. 78. The reference to the mosquito is also found in this same chapter, page 106.

5. The catch here is that a text, or school, which did not utilize the paradoxical mode of speech, which involves the denial or negation of the relative truth, would appear to be deficient in prajñā when simply contrasted with the techniques used by the Southern line. This does not imply that the Northern line was actually deficient in prajñā; it only means that it can give the appearance of being deficient to one who is reading the texts.

6. The reasons for the Northern line of Ch'an's ultimate failure to remain as a strong Ch'an school are not a problem directly raised by this dissertation, but some of the following are relevant:
   1) The Northern Ch'an doctrines were strongly established in the Northern capital of the Chinese empire, and consequently the school was weakened considerably by the An Lu-shan rebellion of 755, and it probably received its death blow during the severe Buddhist persecution of 845 (which generally eliminated all of the older Buddhist schools which had their center of power and influence located in the capital area).

2) Ho-tsê Shen-hui, of the Southern line, was very influential in helping the government raise money to deal with the rebellion of 755, and he received the official gratitude of the court. The approbation of the royal court helped to send converts to the Southern Ch'an master, and many of these were drawn from the Northern Ch'an masters. Again, probably because of Shen-hui's exceptional services to the court, the court adopted and approved of Shen-hui's claim that Hui-neng was the real, and only, Sixth Patriarch, and his doctrines were the correct Ch'an doctrines. However, it should be noted that the line of Ho-tsê Shen-hui did not outlive the Northern line by very much because the Ho-tsê school came to an end with the death of its last patriarch, Tsung-mi, in 841.

3) It seems that the Northern line of Ch'an was more intellectual and exegetical, and adhered more closely to the Indian model of Buddhist practice; this factor may have made the ordinary Chinese more comfortable with the approach typical of the Southern line of Ch'an. It may have been that the Southern line's emphasis upon intuition and suddenness was closer to the Chinese philosophical preferences, and consequently the path of the Southern line may have been more truly Chinese. This point of view has been advocated by Paul Demiéville and D. T. Suzuki in numerous works.

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